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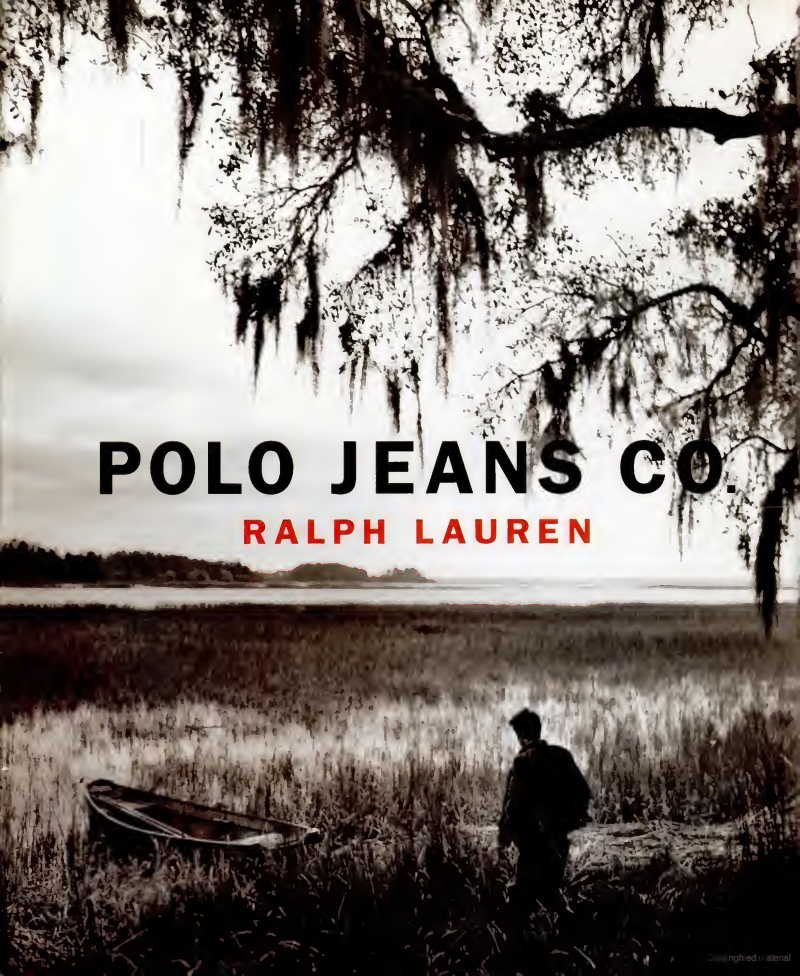
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BY PHILIP WEISS

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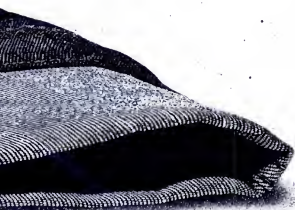


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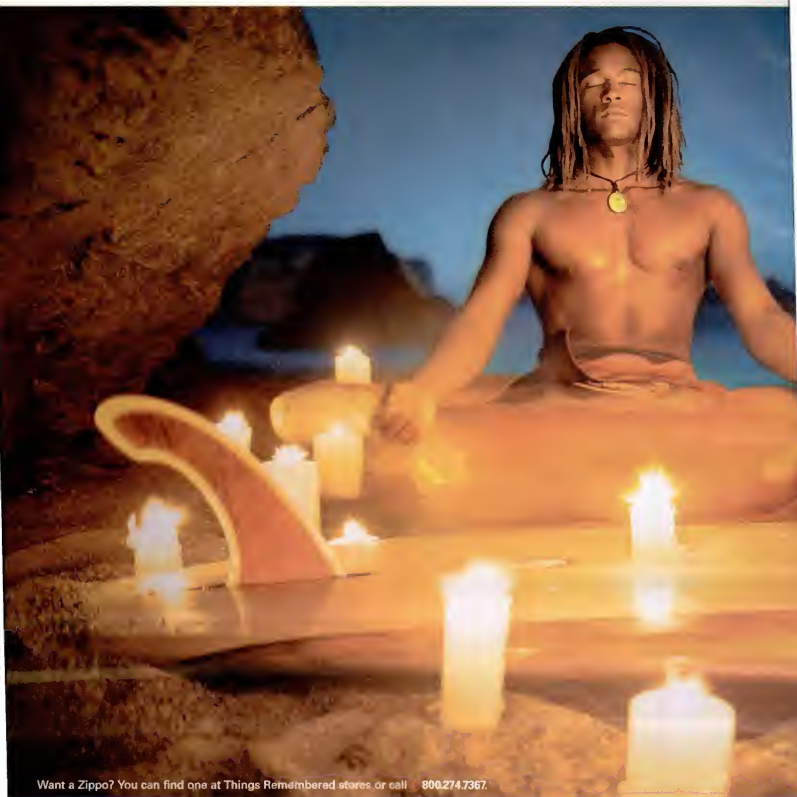




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Sept. 16-17: Bowling Green

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Sept. 23-24: Ohio State

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Oct. 21-22: University of
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Oct. 28-29: Southern
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Nov. 2-3: South West Texas State

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10.98

Detroit, 1994: This *Harlem Nights* inspired '90s gothic techno was. This introduction is by *Interdimensional Science*, photograph by Luis Alvarez.



FEATURES

P.90 THE LOVE ISSUE

Holl's frontwoman has been called everything from bitch to delirious to judgment killer—sometimes all at once. With a new poppin' album hitting the streets, an embittered Courtney Love offers her longest, most in-depth portrait of who she is, why she is. **BY PHILIP WEISS**

P.102 HE'S A PEOPLE PERSON

Welcome to the *Dollhouse* director Todd Solondz is part of a vanguard of directors telling deeply uncomfortable truths about the reallyicky stuff people do when you're not looking. His new comedy, *Happiness* (from more or less self-evident), explores the funny side of pedophilia and rape. Don't laugh. **BY CHRIS MORRIS**

P.104 A TALE OF TWO CITIES

The gothic Detroit techno went to Europe to become stars and become not. By the time they phased through, the techno scene had gone too far (artistic) and the early people who cared about their little love. While and suburban. **BY MARK ROBIN**

P.110 THE SLACKER JESUS ROCK'N'ROLL PORN KING

Twenty-three-year-old impudario Matt Zano had what amounted to a porn epiphany. Mix porn and rock, and a new generation of wankers would be yours (are, the sound of one hand clapping). **BY G. BERTO**

P.114 MAKE 'EM SAY HA

New Orleans's Juvenile has the coolest, and most certainly the weirdest, hip-hop single of the year. Your average "ma'fucka" will be so proud. **BY TONY GREEN**

P.116 FASHION: SEXY BOY

Photograph by Anette Avrami.

P.122 BURIED ALIVE

Five years ago, 16-year-old Jerry McCreary and some friends ended a wild night of partying by robbing and kicking a 93-year-old man, leaving him for dead. Now evidence comes down on whether he swung the fatal blow. But amid a growing hysteria about teen crime, he may be put to death anyway. **BY MARK SCHWAB**

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FR Falling Rock

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UM Undercooked Meat

Mighty Tasty!





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Fatboy Slim parcels out the dough.

BY CRAIG McLEARN:

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HUSH HUSH: What the Beasties' mega-success says about the music biz. **BY JOE FLEISCHER**

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out. BY BOB DRUIS

MEDIA: *Slam* shocker: Basketball is black

BY ZEU BORDOW

BOOKS: Where poetry went wrong, and why it should be forgiven. **BY DENNIS COOPER**

PLUS: our monthly culture roundup. And The Mix.

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LABEL SPOTLIGHT: Bolshi BY SIMON REYNOLDS

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Boys; Thievery Corporation; Wink; and more.

BY CHARLES BARRON

P.158 GENIUS LESSONS

Sean's first-ever teen poetry contest.

BY SEAN LANDERS

Totally fatigued:
fashion photo by
Anette Aurell.

PHOTO (THIS PAGE): FASHION MAIDE PHILLY LEVIN. GROOMING: MATARU/ATELIER. CORALS BY DICHES, "CELESTIO SAINIA" TOP BY MAJOR U. KNECHT, (C&B), AUP DE R. MAJE. JERSEY TOP BY RICH OWEN, BLEND & LANCEBY BY STONE ISLAND. LOVE: CUSTOMIZED CALIFORNIA T-SHIRT, TEE+SHIRT, TEAL-STAINED MUSLIN SHIRT BY THE HUNTER WORLD. ERLANDSON, UNDERSHIRT AND V-NECK SPLIT-SLEEVE SHIRT BY PEVER BY JOHN CHERNAP. FOR FASHION INFORMATION, SEE WHERE TO BUY.

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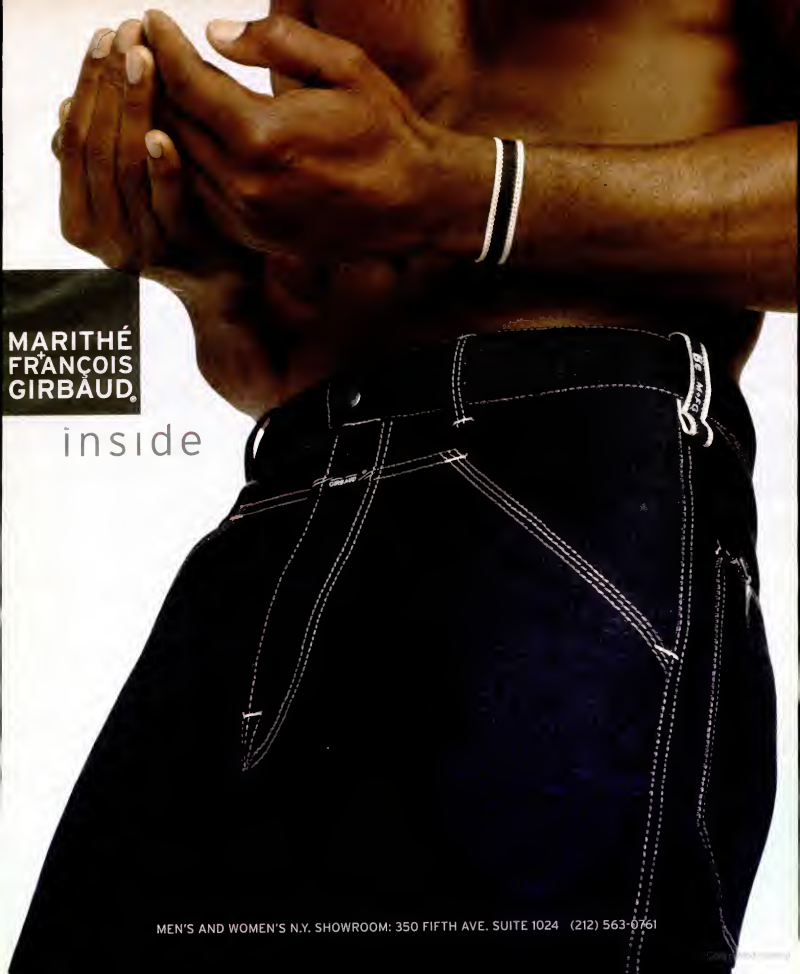
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PHILIP WEISS

"The Love Issue," page 90

Quote: As evidence of Courtney Love's strange evolution from self-destructive grunge queen to high-couture muse, Weiss offers up this curious exchange. "She said she threw an ashtray the other day. I said, 'Did you throw it at someone?' She said, 'No! I'm a mom. I wouldn't throw it at someone!'" **Contributes to:** the *New York Times Magazine*. **Working on:** a fictional biography, *My Wife, a Life*.

LIZ JOHNSON-ARTUR

"A Tale of Two Cities," page 104

Quote: "I didn't have a clue about Detroit before I got there," says Johnson-Artur about the recently revitalized birthplace of techno. "It's a visual city. My approach was to meet people. The pictures are connected to whomever I met on the street and in the clubs." **Has Shot for:** *Arena*, *the Face*, *iD*.

MARK SCHONE

"Buried Alive," page 122

Quote: "He's a sweet kid, but has no clue as to how regular people live," Schone says of Jerry Mooney, who was 16 when he committed the crime that landed him on Death Row. "And he probably never will, because he went straight from a dysfunctional family right into prison." **Has Written for:** the *Village Voice*, *Harpers Bazaar*, the *New York Times*. **Quirky Detail:** Schone once played a prison guard in a Henry Rollins movie.

G. BEATO

"The Stacker Jesus Rock'n'Roll Porn King," page 110

Quote: "The strangest thing," says Beato about tagging along with 23-year-old porn mogul Matt Zane, "was when I watched a gang bang being shot. The woman totally called the shots on that set. Her husband was there with a little video camera. He was upset because he couldn't get any 'soft' footage for European cable." **Has Written for:** *Mother Jones*, *Wired*, *Suck*.

ANETTE AURELL

Fashion, page 116

Quote: "I just like people who are real," says photographer Aurell of the kind of subjects she seeks out. "I'm attracted to teeth. I think teeth are really sexy. I hate it when people have perfect teeth." **Has Shot for:** *Jane*, *Arena*, *the Face*.

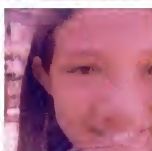


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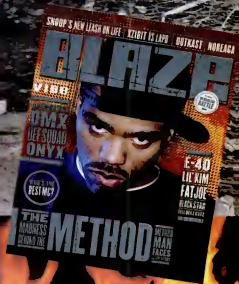
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"HOW DARE YOU SAY BAD THINGS ABOUT THE BACKSTREET BOYS! WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO, KILL THE M?" —Nikki Hill



You're the One for Me, Fatty

Finally there is a music magazine willing to alienate its Nirvana/Pearl Jam-loving readers who are still hanging onto grunge by the last thread of their flannel shirts by naming the very deserving Dave Matthews the "King of Rock" [cover, July]. *Misty Nail Owensboro, Kentucky*

Although I am not a "khaki-wearing" high-fiver feverishly clutching a "Hi-liter" and sporting a "snugly fitting baseball hat," I nevertheless grabbed the July issue solely for the article on Dave Matthews. Sadly, the characterizations of the band bear little resemblance to the group with which this humble admirer is familiar. This band deserve an insightful, thorough article rather than a profile laden with pointless and limiting comparisons and unsuccessful attempts to classify both the fans and the marketing appeal of the band. Dave Matthews, a "brazenly optimistic Everydude" who plays music a little like R.E.M., a little like Pearl Jam, a little like Garth Brooks, a little like Kenny G, a little like Babyface, and a little like the *Titanic* soundtrack? Huh? Perhaps somewhere in a parallel universe there exists an article about the Dave Matthews Band that is actually worth reading.

*Laura Daddigan-O'Rourke
Marion, Massachusetts*

I can't tell you how much I appreciate Dave Matthews portrayed as a human on your cover. It makes me wonder when we can start to see female rockers with their bellies hanging out!
*Jennifer Beck
Ventura, California*

I am truly appalled to read "Dave Matthews is the King of Rock (who knew?)" on the cover. If the Dave

Matthews Band is considered rock, then apparently I've been misinformed as to what "rock" is.
*Colleen Ervin
Dayton, Ohio*

So many groups for whom fame is the priority seem like Top 40 factories. "Fanfare for the Common Man" not only gives the Dave Matthews Band recognition for their unique sound, but portrays them as they truly are: a bunch of guys feelin' the vibe, having a good time, and making music.
*Scotty Crowe
Jekyll Island, Georgia*

It's about time the Dave Matthews Band got the attention they deserve. Thank you for the article; however, I beg to differ on the stereotype of a typical fan as a Gap-clad frat boy or sorority girl. I just saw them in concert and noticed a very diverse crowd. Young, old, preppy, hippie, black, and white: Almost anyone can be found at a Dave Matthews Band concert. I wish the Greek system was not given credit for the rise of a band who preach about love, happiness, and living life.

*Heather Rich
Erie, Pennsylvania*

Dave Matthews is erotic, hypnotic, and melt-in-my-mouth delicious. His imagination and dedication are so evident in his music. When he opens his succulent mouth, the lyrics seep into my mind, and there is an undeniable explosion that slowly trickles through my veins. He's the best damn high I've ever experienced. Simply put, the man is orgasmic.
*Stephanie Lee Schepers
Esser, Maryland*

Quit Playing Games With Our Hearts
I cringe at celebrity slam articles in which

it is apparent the journalist has spent a lot of time yukking it up with their celebrity/victim, only to later print how rotten that person is. It doesn't so much make the celebrity look bad as it makes the journalist look like a hypocrite. Maureen Callahan's article "In Bed With the Backstreet Boys" [July] is such an article. Personally, I found Nick's rude comments about an ugly girl to be refreshingly naive and honest; a more glibful celeb would have realized how awful it would come off and would have been careful only to say what sounds good. So what if Nick's only loves the hottest babes? So what if he owes to gaze in the mirror? I'm not saying it's wonderful for him to be a self-centered jerk, just that it's no big news for a teenage guy (especially an extremely popular jock boy) to be less than an ideal humanitarian. This doesn't mean he can't mature to be a fine man of depth and good character some day. I'd hate for her to sour on the music just because her favorite performer isn't perfect. After all, the boys' voices are good, their songs are danceable, and I don't need to blush when my daughter sings their lyrics in public.

*Sherry Hall
Bailey, Colorado*

I cannot believe the arrogance of the Backstreet Boys. What jerk! Instead of appreciating the teens who made them popular, they degrade them by ignoring a handicapped girl and making fun of a fat girl. If it weren't for these girls, the Backstreet Boys would be nobody.
*Kirsten Hart-Gill
Gulfport, Mississippi*

I am a 17-year-old Backstreet Boys fan. I've never been hysterical at any of the 11 shows I've attended. They don't rule my

SPINONLINE

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Danger Is Their Last Name SPINonline's youthqueuing intern Ultragriff probes nerp-pop icons **Harvey Danger** about "Flaggole Sitta," an unapprising indictment of the premillennial pop culture void—and the smash hit of the summer. Plus: How did they deal with touring on the hunk-heavy *Seminoles* bill while letting their anti-sex symbol flag fly high? Log on September 11 to have all your burning questions answered.

Raves: Spanish Like Don Quixote With World Cup bedlam in the background, **DJ Carl Cox** guided SPINonline through a veritable DJ-culture finishing school. After explaining the Spanish roots of raves, Cox provided a primer for would-be DJs on how to avoid becoming a victim of invariable electronics artist's syndrome. Log on to SPINonline September 25 for step-by-step instructions.

Les Vestro Stylish Filles From the Runaways to Suzy Quito to the Shengra-Las, saucy virgins in bands have been the quintessence of pleasure. So even though Mom told us not to, we sneaked smokes with the latest bad girls, the **Donnas** and the **Prismites**. If you go to Spin Style Online, we'll let you eavesdrop on what they told us about one of the most volatile compounds known to man—leather and lace.

Sound-Off An e-mail from *llovelife@aol.com* made us realize what staffing the **Backstreet Boys** is really all about. After spinning a tangled web of intrigue, she makes things right between Nick and the wheelchair-bound fan from the Spin article "[In Bed With the Backstreet Boys," July]. Jotta finishes with a girl asking her, "Why do you look so happy?" To which she smiles and responds, "Because my heart was just kissed." Who says romance is dead?

SPINdex The debate rages on in the Spin offices. **DJ Courtney Love** set off her music cred when she became a "Big Hollywood Star"? Will you pay \$15.95 for *Malibu Courtney's CD*? Log on to SPINonline, e-mail to post on our message boards, or feature SPINtronic@aol.com to give your opinion.



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AGAINST

ELEMENTS

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GOING POSTAL

life, though they certainly are a big part of it. In regard to comments about Nick, who can blame him? What else can you expect from an 18-year-old guy? He's my fave, but he's such a little prick! I sometimes wonder why I like him. I wouldn't be surprised if he had thrown an autograph bag at a fan. If he had done that to me I'd probably have had a go at him, but it wouldn't put me off. Perhaps he was annoyed at having to face screaming girls all day. Fans should realize the Boys are just like anyone else. They get annoyed, tired, and may treat you badly when they're down.

Sara Watson
Cheshire, England

We all knew from the beginning Spin would never endorse a pop group—let alone a “boy band”—but then why bother to write this article? It's only disillusioned many young girls. In fact, I was at the House of Blues about the “not-aopretty” girl. Nick was not laughing and Howie did not look the least bit upset to dance with her. Rather, it is you who have upset this poor girl because she probably read the article and is crying her eyes out right now. Please remember the old saying, “If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all.”

Brenda Keane
Staten Island, New York

The Backstreet Boys make me sick. What planet do they live on where it is okay to publicly put down girls because they are overweight? Perhaps it hasn't dawned on them they are role models. They should be ashamed of themselves.

Rebecca Laurie
Pelham, Massachusetts

A lot of fans probably read your July issue and started to cry. If I were the Backstreet Boys, I would slap a legal suit on you faster than you could say “Backstreet Boys.” I'm sure all their other fans are with me when I say, “Your magazine is nothing but trash.”

Bucky Dymond
Durkys, Pennsylvania

Thank you so much for printing the article on the Backstreet Boys. I am getting tired of reports that make them sound like Boy Scouts. It's good to know they can be cruel and do the same things and think the same thoughts as everyone else their age does.

Martha Perault
Massillon, Ohio

That handicapped girl should be happy one of the Backstreet Boys even talked to her. So many girls would love to have one of the Backstreet Boys look at them—let alone talk to them. Just because she is handicapped does not

HOSTILITY, INC.: HE'S NOT JUST THE PRESIDENT

Ah, nothing smells better than that warm summer scent of freshly rising talent (“Straight Outta Limpin’,” July). Korn on the cob, hot buttered soul Biskits, awaiting at Soulls after afternoon. It's B.Y.O.T., y'all. Here's hoping Talent comes in kegs for the new Pillsbury's Best: four tummy-poked hip-hop/heavy metal memoras (and one more obligatory evil guy with red hair) out to test their while-bread appeal by sopping up some good ol' greasy-peasy ghetto funk gray w/ a bag of Biskits.

Lovebottling the Tommy Hilfiger/Neutuca masses with “likeling tastes for breakfast” and Donna Summer, Limp Biskit “singer” Frederick Durst serves up proof white boys wit soul will always rule da world. And you ain't worth a three dollar bill if you ain't bustin' your way ‘cross four or more genres like a finely tuned Cuisineur. But when your band has the ability to actually dumb down a George-funking-Michael pop anthem, it's time to look in the mirror, grab your new Giggle Mach3, and one-stroke your jiggle.

Lucky for Spin, the Beach House was in NJ-Jersey this summer. You could just limp over for a quick story issue. Maybe that explains the two-page spread. It certainly does not explain why a “hip” and “edgy” magazine would take a shot at the most obvious target on the planet: the Backstreet Boys. Which one is the genuinely greater evil: Ebonics-wielding aggro-“Posseurs” for the testosterone-addicted or candy-coated hairless chests for pre-pube hotties? At least the Boys aren't in denial about who writes their songs. And I bet my JNCOs that if Maureen Callahan were to hang out with the Biz, she'd hear something a Tad Friendly worse than characterizing a girl as “not so pretty.”

So, c'mon, Spin, Cool Britannia loves Boy Bands. Are we suddenly too highbrow for the ol' chapel? You've already pulled off the impossible: I'm sticking up for (the innocuous-in-comparison) soul-and-dance piece. Which means, if what you say about Backstreet Boys fans is true, I'm feeling kinda gay (and lovin' it).

It doesn't matter who you are,
Where you're from,
What you do,
As long as you love me,

Tony Stockton
Roanoke, Virginia

mean she deserves special treatment. All the Backstreet fans agree the Backstreet Boys are not as mean as you portray them.

Danielle Trimble
Fort Monroe, Virginia

How dare you say bad things about the Backstreet Boys! What are you trying to do, kill them?

Nikki Hill
Louisville, Kentucky

You totally trashed the Backstreet Boys. The article must be fake. First of all, Nick doesn't like tuns, and second, Kevin is 26, not 27.

Jessica Griffith
Glen Burnie, Maryland

Not only does Maureen Callahan go out of her way to make derogatory remarks about the guys, but her description of their fans is insulting and condescending. Odd, isn't she insinuating that a how the Boys treat their fans?

Angela Johnston
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Your article has outraged many Backstreet Boys fans and has prompted some to become ex-fans. Even though we scream in their ears and try to steal their personal belongings, they still love us. The Backstreet Boys are incredible human beings who care a lot about people and each other.

Wendi Zavatsky
Arlington, Texas

You may have received letters from many upset young, frustrated, and crazed girls. I suggest you ignore them. Those girls are living in a dream world. Don't get me wrong, I'm a big Backstreet Boys fan myself. I own the “All Access” video, three of their CDs, and have posters on my wall, and a scrap folder with articles and pictures. I love the Boys, but these fans think they are perfect. Give them a break, ladies! Screaming in their faces, allowing them no private life, asking them to sign a billion autographs (you know these guys have Camel Tunnel by now), and flashing camera flashes in their faces—all of this must get on their nerves at some point. Let's face reality: The Boys are only boys.

Mako Blevens
Wichita, Kansas

Big Trend Bust!

I knew when I saw your cover blurb, “Big Trend! Ex-Junkie Posseurs [July], I was in for trouble. The accompanying article, “Ex Games,” makes me sick—and I'm not talking dope-sick. Lily Burana writes: “In truth, there's nothing singularly spectacular about recover-

ing.” Ask my family, my friends, and the other people who didn't have to attend my funeral. My recovery, like my drug use, is my life, not my lifestyle. I didn't shoot dope to impress you and didn't get clean to glorify what I can only describe as despair and degradation. It wasn't “art” and it wasn't noble. The fact that past suffering and humiliation gives recovering addicts some kind of ridiculous cache among inacid, trend-mongering voyeurs is laughably pathetic. Not to mention recklessly irresponsible.

Miko Paikowski
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

I am an ex-user and have contracted Hepatitis C as a result. I now have an incurable disease that has totally screwed up my life. Yet, somehow, in “Ex Games,” addiction and recovery seem glamorous. You cite people such as the laughable Scott Weiland and the lame-ass white-bread idiot Jerry Stahl. Why not have the guts to talk to those people who have lost everything, who have track marks that look like flesh was skinned from their arms, who look decades older than they are, who live on the street. Instead you talk with Rhonda Weiss, a clueless phony bitch in a possum coat, who takes your writer on a possum tour of New York City. Yeah, I've exchanged horror stories with other ex-addicts. But to think people actually brag about how big their track marks are! Of course losers have the art of kidding themselves down pat. But must you devote space to these brain-dead people?

Silver Morrison
East Oakland, California

“Ex Games” makes some valid points, but they are dulled by Spin's staggering hypocrisy. While branding the media for focusing on the tales of ex-heroin addicts, you are simply using the article as an excuse to use “Ex-Junkie” in a headline. If I could peruse your archives for interviews with ex-heroin addict musicians, I am sure I would find them littered with enlarged quotes printed indelicately and only for shock value.

Al Shipley
Rehoboth, Delaware

D.I.Y. R.I.P.

Thank you for the article about Maximum RockRoll's Tim Yohannan (“This Was Hardcore,” July). If it had been the passing of any other well-known punk, I'd be writing to Maximum RockRoll itself. You made me cry over a man I both revered, reviled, and eventually consigned to a page of my own personal punk history.

Jessica Cioale
Ullster Park, New York

Even if I were a major-label-hating-vegan-anarchist-feminist-chainsmoker, I still

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DJ ECONOMICS 101

Who makes easier money: DJs or rock
bands? Fatboy Slim breaks it down

There was once a time when bands held the patent on the dollar-grabbing, drug-scoring, sex-gobbling rock'n'roll lifestyle. But thanks to increased competition for music fans' money, the ever-increasing obsolescence of the guitar, and other highfalutin' pomo cultural theories, the DJ is King. Or at least rich: With minimal overhead and no pesky bandmates to share the cash with, the anonymous figure behind the turntables is boss of the bucks as well as the beats.

Norman "Fatboy Slim" Cook is uniquely placed to compare and contrast the economics of being in a band versus being a DJ. As a member of the Housemartins, Beats International, and Freakpower, he spent more than a decade touring and recording with a band. As the hugely successful DJ and producer Fatboy Slim, he has made enough cash (i.e., \$48,000 for two days' remix work with Bootsy Collins) to turn down a remix job on Madonna's "Ray of Light." "I was fed up being the (continued)



The man who said no to Madonna: Norman Cook.

(continued) bridesmaid instead of the bride," he says, grinning.

With his second Fatboy Slim album, the supremely dumb but totally fun *You've Come a Long Way, Baby*, out this month, Cook gives the lowdown on the high finance of making dance music in the late '90s. "Can I just preface this by saying the whole money thing is boring," he says chirpily. "I'm not doing this for the money." CRAIG MCLEAN

FATBOY SLIM EXPLAINS WHERE THE MONEY GOES:

DJ

VS

BAND

The Album

\$15 The entire budget for the new Fatboy Slim album is the cost of two DAT tapes. The good thing is you don't have to talk people into playing on your record. Before, if I wanted to make an album with really good people, I'd have to say to the record company: "Can I have \$300,000 please?"

The Video

\$150,000 For "The Rockafeller Skank" I came to an uneasy compromise with the record company: I'll do the video as long as I'm barely in it. I'm not a glamour face. That's one of the reasons I like being a DJ: I don't have to stand onstage and try to not look bored.

The Gross Fee (Per Gig)

\$32,000 As a weekly salary I was offered [and turned down] \$32,000 to play a Versace fashion show in New York. That, plus two first-class flights from London, and a Fatboy Slim at a top hotel. I don't like doing "corporate" events. Tom and Ed [the Chemical Brothers] did a Red Hot Chili Peppers after-show party, and they got broken off after half an hour.

The Road Crew (Per Show)

\$115 If I'm doing a gig in England, it's just me and my mate Ginger Tim. He gets \$115 for driving, but he only has to drive home. I mainly pay him not to get drunk. When I'm abroad he carries the records into the venue because there are always lots of people looking at you, and if I'm struggling through the dancefloor with big boxes of records, it looks a bit crap.

The Rider

\$21 My rider is a bottle of a vodka and a liter of orange juice, though at certain clubs there are other "extras." At one London club I get two E's and a gram of coke, on top of the vodka and orange. If there's only one person playing your venue, you can afford to spoil them.

Rehearsals

\$0 Rehearsing? As a DJ? I do absolutely nothing! Spending money on records is possibly the closest I get to jamming for inspiration, but I get sent most of the records I want. I also get into clubs for free. I spend maybe \$240 for "refreshments," but I would have done that anyway.

The Corporate Whore Stuff

\$3,200 During the "lean years" I was asked to write the music for a Smurf computer game, but I couldn't finish it. My manager said, "I need you to do something because I've already gotten \$800 and can't give it back." So I deliberately made the music worse, and they never used it.

\$240,000 That's what the last Freakpower album cost. But we did record it in the Bahamas and mix it at Peter Gabriel's Real World studios. Then we trashed that version and remixed it in Los Angeles.

\$32,000 I think that's the most Freakpower spent on a video. It was for a clip of "Get in Touch." The whole band flew out to San Francisco for the shoot.

\$24,000 Freakpower got about this much to headline this big festival in Switzerland. Bush were on first, then B.B. King, then the Red Hot Chili Peppers, then us. Being Swiss, they said, "You sold more albums in Switzerland last year than those other artists, therefore you are headlining." But you've got all those crew costs, and the cash gets split between band members.

\$3,200 With Freakpower we'd have a crew of up to seven people, including a tour manager, two drivers, two engineers, a lighting engineer, and roadie—plus a hired coach to get everyone to the gig.

\$320 Freakpower had hot meals for 14, snacks for a crew of seven, two bottles of vodka, one bottle of tequila, a case of premium beer, and general buffet stuff.

\$1,000 Rehearsing a band takes at least four days—each non-band member gets \$180 per day. Other costs include rehearsal studio, transporting gear, and getting an engineer to set it up. For the \$1,000 you get to hang out in a dingy basement studio and drink shit coffee out of Bigfoot cups.

\$112,000 When Levi's used Freakpower's "Turn On, Tune In, Cop Out" in a commercial, we got six figures. But half went to the record company because we owed them so much money. We never broke even.



+ INCOMING

New artists: the good, the bad, the soon-to-be unavoidable



1-A Anouk *Together Alone* (Columbia) If teenage boys could genetically engineer a rock goddess, they'd conjure up someone like Anouk. This hard-rocker sounds like Ann Wilson, looks like Claudia Schiffer, and has the potential to be Holland's most popular export since, um, lingerie model Frederique.

1-B The Surfers From the Pipe (Epic) The Pitch: Two studly surfer champs (and one former MTV sports host) decide to make a record. The Catch: Their unsurfy stoner rock is swifly mopey for guys who spend their days judging bikini contests in Hawaii.

1-C Snowpony *The Slow Motion World of Snowpony* (Radioactive) Tasteful beats, a supple female croon, and atmosphere to spare, courtesy of former members of Stereolab and My Bloody Valentine. Prime material for an Urban Outfitters mix CD.

2-Sonicchrome *Breathe the Daylight* (Capitol) Not to be confused with Semisonic, although they probably will be. This likable-if-unoriginal SoCal trio pump out the same radio-friendly power pop as Fastball, et al. Soon to headline the upcoming Monsters of Innuocuous Pop tour.

2-B Nicole Rénée *Nicole Rénée* (Atlantic) The Juilliard-schooled, opera-trained Rénée sets herself apart from generic R&B divas by writing and producing an unusual soul-funk fusion. There's even lit-major booty talk: Her "rookin' chair" don't stop, "if you catch her drift."

2-C 8-1/2 *Souvenirs* *Happy Feet* (RCA/Victor) These Austin, Texas-based indie hoppers set themselves apart from the neo-swing legends by being more interested in Serge Gainsbourg than zoot suits. And they like to sing in French.

3-The Aluminum Group *Piano* (Minty Fresh) If you're still brokenhearted over the demise of Aztec Camera and Orange Juice, this one's for you. Chicago brothers John and Frank Navin make classic indiepop, complete with strings and Edwyn Collins-esque vocals.

3-B Mary Cutrufello *When the Night Is Through* (Mercury) Because she's a dreadlocked, guitar-playing black woman, Cutrufello is often compared to Tracy Chapman. But this singer/guitarist plays countrified rock more akin to the music of Steve Earle and the Boss.

3-C Orgy *Candyass* (Eleven Tree/Reprise) Kom's first signing to their Elevenette label, these NIN-style techno-grinners will also amp-up Kom's Family Values tour this fall. TRACEY PEPPER

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Dan Schindler, Third Classman
Virginia Military Institute

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BACKSTAGE PASS Gossip! Scandal! Rumors! And other juicy dish

How do rock stars spend their summer vacation? Partying, naturally. At a private shindig at Manhattan's Moonbath—a Leo-approved downtown restaurant—the **Third Eye Blind** boys (and the women who love them) kicked back following the band's sold-out show at the Hammerstein Ballroom. Self-consciously study front-man **Stephan Jenkins** and his willowy arm attachment, actress and Hollywood babe



du jour **Charlize Theron** (dating supermodels is apparently passé) schmoozed into the early-morning hours with unlikely fan **Harvey Weinstein**. "Steve's band is great," said the chain-smoking Miramax mogul, while waiting in line for the men's room. "They've got a new sound that's really exciting. But I'm off-duty now!" Later, the happy couple shared their secret to maintaining a long-distance relationship: "You have to plan everything," said Theron, who racks up thousands of frequent-flyer miles in order to protect her boyfriend from overzealous groupies. "She's about to become a security issue," Jenkins said. "You know why she's with me?" he confided. "Because I'm the only guy who's not intimidated by her in heels." Which settles rumors that the 5' 9" South African actress—who was in New York City filming Miramax's *The Yards* with **Mark Wahlberg** and **Joaquin Phoenix**—is only with him to get her hands on a green card....

The night before the Lilith Fair strolled through town, founder **Sarah McLachlan** was feted at the swank Boathouse in Manhattan's Central Park by grandfathery Arista president **Clive Davis**—on "my day off," she complained. According to the invitation, the reason for the party was simply "her music has touched our souls." In other words, "Her music has made us stinking rich." "Surfacing has gone triple platinum!" crowed Davis, who gave an inspired, if seemingly endless speech to assembled guests, who included McLachlan's purple-haired drummer/hubby, **Ashwin Sood**, and Lilith bandwagon jumper **Liz Phair**. The crowd, surprisingly devoid of other Fair maidens, was heavy on media elites, which may explain Phair's presence. She was doggedly promoting her new album....

What would Martha Stewart think? At his surreal Fourth of July barbecue in East Hampton, Long Island—where he just acquired a very Gatsby-esque seaside summer home—**Sean "Puffy" Combs** welcomed guests such as **Mike Tyson**, Def Jam cofounder **Russell Simmons**, and Interscope bigwig **Ted Field** with a basketful of "special" brownies. As for that wasn't special enough, Puffy also had a massage, henna art, and Mister Softee ice cream truck on hand. Ironically, not long ago this very same Bad Boy was criticizing them—Motown Records honcho **Andre Harrell** for spending all his time in the Hamptons and, hence, losing touch "with the street." **Lil' Kim** made quite the diva entrance in a blond wig, white Jackie O. shades, and a skintight Chanel bodysuit that showcased her recent boob job. Her entourage included her **Junior**



■ Trophy date: **Stephan Jenkins** and **Charlize Theron**, far left. **Lil's** a beeyotch: **Lil' Kim** and **Diamond** catch some rays, above. I'm your candy man: **Puffy** with basket of "special" brownies, left.

M.A.F.I.A. cohorts and her Gucci-collared pet puppy, **Diamond**. Kim announced her new role as a Candies shoe model as well as president of Queen Bee Records, a gift from her major-label distributor, Atlantic Records. "I wanna record with **Madonna**. I love the old Madonna. You know, 'Holiday' and 'Express Yourself'." Kim said of pop-oriented plans for her upcoming second album, which apparently won't cover the same sexualized territory as her 1996 debut, *Hard Core*. "A girl can't wear the same dress twice." Following an impromptu lawn dance by Puffy's cute four-year-old son, **Justin**, who has inherited Daddy's love for being the center of attention, Kim changed the course of hip-hop history. She kissed and made up with **Cheryl Flowers**, the (literally) powerful manager of **Faith Evans**—widow of the **Notorious B.I.G.**, Kim's former Svengali/married boyfriend—who once duked it out with Kim outside of Harlem's Apollo Theater. "Life's too short. It's all about love now," Flowers said of the spontaneous reunion as she searched in vain for the M.I.A. host. **Aaliyah** Puffy was exhausted from a night of DJ'ing (putting his own *No Way Out* in the CD player, then pressing "Play") and dancing with models till 5 a.m. at nearby club *N V T* Taunamia. He had long ago retired for what someone said was either "a beauty nap" or "a booty nap." The brownie basket was nowhere in sight. **JAMES PATRICK HERMAN**

BANDS WHO'LL STOOP TO ANYTHING TO BE ON TV ...TODAY ON JENNY!

Today's topic on *The Jenny Jones Show* is "Teen Makeovers," which the ever-fly Usher definitely does not need. The singer is crooning "U Make Me Wanna" in front of a screaming studio audience. After hitting one last high note, he opens his arms wide and squeals, "Jen-nny! Where you at, baby?" Syndicated television's un-funkiest talk-show host rushes onstage for a hug. "Usher!" she shouts. "So cool. So cool!"

Apparently fueled by the premise that musical interludes—like plastic surgery, special effects, and hot cocoa—make everything better, Jones's eight-year-old "issue-oriented" talk show has become a surreal haven for musical acts that seemingly subscribe to the notion that any TV exposure is good TV exposure. After a two-season test run littered with has-beens (the *Mary Jane* Girls), alt-rock nobodies (Jackspierce), and Chicago-area bar bands (the Mac-A-Ronia), the show has recently upped the musical ante, somehow attracting such platinum-sellers as Usher and K-Ci and Jo-Jo.

"We want what's young, hot, and hip," says Femita Wynn, music booker for *Jenny Jones*, which explains the presence of a number of successful R&B and hip-hop artists, many of whom would be hard-pressed to score gigs on such white-bread bastions as *The Tonight Show*. But this does not explain such certifiable bottom-feeders as the Fabulous Thunderbirds and Eddie Money, both of whom have played in recent months. "We'll book just about anyone if people around the office like them," Wynn says. Enter fallen alt-rock heroes *Dinosaur Jr.*, who appeared with "Mothers Who Party With Their Daughters."

Whatever the case, a spot on *Jenny* offers access to a mass market, if not a particularly cool one. Rappers have taken to disses such as "your shit belongs on *Jenny Jones*," but according to one major-label publicist, "As long as the performer isn't onstake with the panelists, we don't worry about them looking stupid." Maybe they should: When there's a certain stoopid-by-association effect when an audience gives it up for Big Daddy Kane and "Former Nerds With New Attitudes" in the same hour.

"I let bends know what the topic is going to be, and if they're not comfortable with it we pick another date," says Wynn. "More often than not, the artists are fans." Indeed, *Dinosaur Jr.*'s management confirms "an affinity for the show." "People forget," Wynn says, "that Jenny used to be a drummer in an all-girl band [the Cover Girls]. She also used to sing backup for Wayne Newton. Really." **ZEY BOWEN**

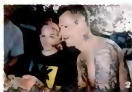


■ Jenny, Jenny who can I turn to? Usher, left, on *Jenny Jones*.

**The engine's in the front,
but its heart's in the same place.**



Drivers wanted. 



WARPED TOUR '98

We sent six bands six cameras. Here's what came back, minus the wiener shots



- 1 Road rules: members of the Pietaaters and Bouncing Souls.
- 2 All I want is your autograph: Rancid's Brett Reed and fan.
- 3 There's something about Larry: a boy and his hair gel.
- 4 Over the edge: skate champ Steve Caballero.
- 5 Tattooed love boys: Toby Morse of H2O, left, and friend.
- 6 Bridge over troubled teenagers: Jay Whalley and Lindsay McDougal of Frenzal Rhomb.

BRAIN SPOTTING

Soul Couching's new album is a neurotic paradox you can dance to

In the overcrowded basement of New York City's Knitting Factory, M. Doughty of Soul Couching begs for rejection. "Heckle me—I mean it," he says between reading poems from his self-published chapbook, *Slanky*, to an audience of nerdy men with wallet chains, who are clearly Soul Couching fans, and beautiful women in business suits and black dresses, who are a complete mystery.

Soul Couching's frontman has come home, with everything complicated and uncomfortable that coming home entails. The Knitting Factory, the city's mecca of avant experimentation, is where he met his bandmates, drummer Yuval Gabay, bassist Sebastian Steinberg, and keyboardist Mark De Gil Antoni, in 1992, while working as a doorman. The venue provided the band with their first gigs. Tonight, the wallish poetry event organizer is mocking Doughty's dancing while introducing him, betraying either an intimate history or a stunning lapse of taste. Doughty squirms and looks uncomfortable, while at the same time seeming to

enjoy squirming and looking uncomfortable.

He's an unlikely rock star, an overgrown army brat with short blond hair, glasses, and a cartoonish laugh. He attracts passionate criticism: Reviewers have attacked his voice (too nasal), his lyrics (too arty), and, of course, his dancing (too goofy). And that's just a warm-up. "The *New York Press* called me 'eminently strangleable,'" Doughty says, sighing. "Can you believe that?"

Actually, yes. Everything lovable and/or despicable about Soul Couching distills and concentrates in the lanky frontman. He is all about paradoxes that live in uneasy coexistence, both personality and aesthetically. So it's easy to see why some people react violently to this grab bag of skill and sloppiness, highbrow and low.

The band's new album, *E/Oso*, is unlikely to leave many listeners on the sidelines. The group's collaborative songwriting process has yielded another disc (their third) of tight beats, outlandish soundscapes, and superb musician- (continued)



Webelos or Eagle Scouts?: From left, Mark De Gil Antoni, Sebastian Steinberg, M. Doughty, and Yuval Gabay

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(continued) ship. Some of the tracks are more accessible than those on, for example, the band's debut, *Ruby Vroom*, while others remain willfully obscure. And although *Soul Coughing* have built a strong following for their live shows, the music has never been particularly radio-friendly, a situation their label, Warner Bros., hopes to change with this album.

"Our record company says, 'We have a lot of faith in you guys,'" bassist Steinberg says, "which becomes more and more loaded."

"They're primed to reach their biggest audience yet," enthuses Peter Rauh, Warner Bros. vice president of marketing. "This is the future!" How could a band not feel the pressure?

Soul Coughing should have an easier time wooing airplay on this outing. Although their last album, *Irresistible Bliss*, consisted mostly of love songs, the passion was expressed through lyrics about mathematics, corporate takeovers, and necroplexy. This time, the love is more direct. In his spare, antiseptic Manhattan apartment, Doughty

says, "I was trying not to write love songs this time around." He snatches up a copy of the new CD and scans the song titles. "I failed." He traces a finger along the track listings. "Let's see," he says. "Uh, drug song, fame song, love song, can't specify, kind of love song, kind of love song, tangentially love song, sort of a love song." He trails off, and his goofy laugh bubbles up. "Kind of a disappointment, isn't it?" He shrugs. "I am a man of love."

Back in the Knitting Factory's basement, Doughty is giving vent to everything that makes him a target for criticism and affection. "I'm serious about the heckling," he says. "I want it!" But the crowd's shouts and hoots are friendly, and the one woman who yells an actual insult receives an angry glare from the people around her. She ducks behind a pillar. The audience shifts its attention back to the stage, only to find Doughty shielding his eyes from the lights, searching in the darkness for the one woman who gave him what he wanted. BRENDAN BAKER

Manufactured Diva Alert

Further proof that pop stars are made, not born, is the overnight musical success of a 15-year-old British model named **Billie Piper**. Radiating giggly cool in an ubiquitous campaign of print and TV ads for the irrelevant U.K. pop bible *Smash Hits*, Piper—with her Mariah-like good looks—caught the eye of an A&R rep at Virgin Records. She brought her in for a chat, figuring Piper would be perfect as the inaugural artist on Virgin's new teen imprint, Innocent Records. The fact that Piper could actually sing seemed to be a happy accident. Deciding the virtually driven U.K. market would respond to Piper's high Q-factor, Innocent, in July, released a single, the naggingly catchy call-and-response teen anthem, "Because We Want To." Seven days later it was No. 1. Virgin America seems to think it's got a hit on its hands as well: It's retooling her album *Honey 2 The B*, for an early 1999 release. And what are Piper's thoughts on this nanosecond leap to stardom? "I'm just sort of an average teenager." JONATHAN BERNSTEIN



I'm the DJ, he's the "director": DJ Shadow, right, and James Lavelle of UNKLE.



THE MEN FROM UNKLE

An all-star collective brings art rock to beatheads

Beck when trip-hop was in its infancy and London's Mo' Wax was the underground label leading the way, Mo' CEO James Lavelle had a humble idea—form a collective with the best dance, rock, and hip-hop artists of the day, and release a record of G-force impact. "We wanted to do an album that wasn't just about our time but had the past, the present, and the future to it," Lavelle says, "one that would reflect a certain lifestyle." Five years later, the resultant *Psycence Fiction* does just that, and the world it captures is of some suburban tomorrowland—a place where skate kids on hard drugs read Dostoyevsky while waiting for the latest software "cracks" to download.

A seamless mix of hip-hop, ethereal beatscapes, and blurry drug-rock, *Psycence Fiction* offers a run of celebrity cameos including Beastie Boy Mike D, Metallica's Jason Newsted, and Thom Yorke of Radiohead. Experimental hip-hop luminary DJ Shadow sculpted the music, so what, exactly, did non-musician Lavelle contribute? Though he's credited alongside Shadow as "producer," he didn't even touch a mixing board. "It's like the relationship of a director to a movie," Lavelle says. "I chose the cast. And chose the best."

"James has always been an ideas man," says Shadow, who recorded 1996's *Endtroducing...* for Mo' Wax. "He felt I could translate his thoughts into sound. It's an extension of the relationship I've had with Jamee since I first talked to him over five years ago. He was espousing an endless stream of obscure references and I was one of the few people who knew what he was talking about."

Shadow's music, with its movie-derived samples about furia, souls, heavens, and devils, has a Gothic flavor; with *Psycence Fiction*, this solemnity has blossomed into full-blown prog rock.

"Mad" Richard Ashcroft of the Verve howls about his "Lonely Soul" over moody strings, while Thom Yorke ends the album with "Rabbit in Your Headlights," a bruised aria from the edge of a fading consciousness. "I was surprised at how emotionally involved people were willing to get," Shadow says. "Thom did the whole thing in one take. It was so raw I felt like my hair was blown back."

Psycence Fiction is certainly one of the most ambitious records of the year, but can its cred-power help Lavelle rid himself of his image as a too-hip Cool Britannia media darling? He certainly hopes so. "I don't want to be perceived as some fucking toy," he snaps. "I just want to achieve something without people perceiving it as hype or luck." TONY MARCUS



brehtaking.

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ANATOMY OF A SET LIST

Rammstein: Silly German pyromaniacs...on tour!

Think Kiss. Think Big Black's "Kerosene." Add German vocals that sound like they're being sung by *The Simpsons'* McBain and you've got Rammstein, a Teutonic metal-industrial sextet that's always set for burning down the *haus*. With their second album, *Sehnsucht*, climbing the U.S. charts, the band is packing up their whips and flamethrowers and planning a full Stateside *putsch* for this fall. "Rammstein is not very fond of the normal rock concert," guitarist Richard Kruspe says with atypical understatement. "When you look at our show, it's very visual." Indeed—especially compared to when you don't look at it. **TIM KENEALLY**



The Set List:
 "Rammstein" (mantel)¹
 "Beastreli Mich" (peitsche)²
 "Weissens Fleisch" (fusse)³
 "Seemann" (boot)⁴
 "Heirate Mich"⁵
 "Riecher" (bogen)⁶
 "Du Hast" (telefon/knall)⁷
 "Büch Dicht" (dido)⁸
 "Engel" (lycopoefle/sticks)⁹
 "Bringer" (flamm/knall/hände)¹⁰

Translation:

¹"Ramming Stone" (coat). With typical German efficiency, vocalist Till Lindemann emerges from the wings with his chain-mail jacket already ablast.
²Makes Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat look like a wuss.
³"But Beasts, don't try this at home. After a few missteps involving gasoline, a match, and severe burns, Rammstein dumped the D.I.I. approach. They now employ trained pyrotechnics professionals.

⁴"Punish Me" (whip). The strapping singer "begs for humiliation as he begs to flog the bare hide of each

skinny keyboardist Flake.⁵
⁶Swam in the 1988 Olympics.
⁷A man.

⁸"White Meat" (feet). Enter the flaming shoe. This song has been cited as proof of a neo-Nazi agenda. It might also be interpreted as an endorsement of pork or poultry. Significance of blazing footwear unclear; possible variation on the old "hotfoot" gag.

⁹"Sailor" (boat). Flake crowdfurfs aboard an inflatable raft. An existential acknowledgment that we are all adrift, even in a sea of humanity? *Ja, right.*

¹⁰"Merry Me." Uncharacteristic moment of sentimentality, hence lack of fire.

¹¹Idiomatically, "Good Sense" (bow). Flaming arrows are shot across the stage from a crossbow. Ted Nugent also favored this stage antic. He, too, has been accused of harboring right-wing views.

¹²"You Have" (telephone explosion). Lindemann gets a call on his cell phone, which blows up and bursts

into flames. Gives new meaning to the phrase "crank call."

¹³"Band Over" (er, dido). Lindemann pulls a giant rubber penis out of his pants, pretends to *stump* Flake, then spouts an unidentified white goo into the mosh pit. Insists in interviews that he's straight.

¹⁴"Angel" (gunpowder/sick). Flaming drumsticks. Once in a while, you gotta give the drummer some. A decided improvement over the traditional solo.

¹⁵"Messenger" (flames/ exploding hands). Effect in which Lindemann seems to fire blanks out of his fingertips. "As an encore," Lindemann wheels out a military flamethrower and shoots balls of fire into the sky.

¹⁶Pullied same effect on his "Puff Daddy & the Family" tour.

¹⁷Contingent on local fire codes. According to Kruspe, the Chicago fire marshal banned any pyro effects, citing the Great Fire of 1871.



Glam slem: clockwise from far left, Michael Stipe, Jonathan Rhys Meyers, and David Bowie.



ALL THAT GLITTERS

Michael Stipe gets a dose of Hollywood with *Velvet Goldmine*

When R.E.M. frontman Michael Stipe formed a film production company, Single Cell, in 1994, he found himself becoming more hands-on than most Hollywood ponytails. As an executive producer of *Velvet Goldmine*, the already much-debated glam-rock epic directed by Todd Haynes (due November 13), Stipe taught actors to be rock stars; rock stars to be actors (sort of); and made sure a gay kiss wasn't jettisoned by the film's distributor Miramax (it wasn't).

Much of the peerless buzz on *Velvet Goldmine*, however, has centered around David Bowie's seemingly unreasonable refusal to allow Haynes to use songs from his 1972 album *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*. Considering that *Goldmine* chronicles the rise of a Bowie-like singer named Brian Slade (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) in glam-rock London, it was a major blow not to be able to include his music. Stipe gave it his best shot.

"I talked to Bowie several times, but he didn't want to be involved," Stipe says. "He was very professional and gentlemanly about it, but it was very disappointing at the time."

So why did Bowie refuse to participate? Turns out he is working on his own Ziggy epic. "At this moment, negotiations are in progress for a project I've been working on for some time called *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust*," Bowie said in a written reply to questions from Spin.

"This project incorporates the original period songs of the early '70s. In addition, I have been completing 90-second and two-minute fragments of songs that were written during the recording of *Ziggy* but abandoned at that time. Hopefully I will have at least six or more original period songs to complement this project."

"I quite like some of Todd Haynes's movies, especially *Safe*," Bowie added, and was happy to read his script for *Velvet Goldmine*—ironically, the title of one of his abandoned songs. Although I thought the script quite affectionate, I found that his ideas ran too close to *Ziggy*. To have allowed my Ziggy period songs to be included in his film would, I felt, have given the public the impression that this was the Ziggy Stardust story and would have put my own project in jeopardy. One could probably regard *Velvet Goldmine* as a trailer for *Ziggy Stardust*."

In retrospect, Stipe feels losing the songs was "a blessing. It pushed Todd further from what is real," he says, "which was ultimately his intention: to replicate a time when nothing was what it seemed. To have that real of a reference might have been a drag on the film."

For his part, Stipe plans to be involved in the selling of *Velvet Goldmine*. "I've offered myself, and my band is willing to play at the premiere," he says. "I have this vision of us on a flatbed truck, pulling up in front of the theater, playing a song, then just driving off." **STEVEN MUKIN**

HUSH HUSH

THE MONTHLY DISH ON THE MUSIC BUSINESS



The enormous success of the *Beastie Boys'* *Hell No* has the entire industry wondering how, in an era of apparent apathy toward veteran artists, these three New York City thirtysomethings managed to push almost 700,000 records over the counter in the first week of release. Some industry watchers say the *Beasties* reaped more than just karmic benefits from their Tibetan Freedom Concerts. Others point to the cross-cultural appeal of the record,

which is resonating with more than affluent frat brats as evidenced by significant airplay and sales coming from Urban-leaning stations and retail outlets. Maybe the sales blitz is due to a superior setup effort by Capitol Records under recently ousted president **Gary Gersh**. Or maybe the *Beasties* just made a good record.

Simplistic though it may be, the argument is worth examining when you consider the prodigious stifling of releases in (continued)

LOVE POTION



FEEL
THE
TINGLE

Nothing kills more bad breath germs.

© P&G 1998 Among leading mouthwashes.

NOISE

Flower power: A daisy-and-ivy arrangement brings a "little ray of sunshine to brighten the room," says Nelson. "We have only fresh-cut flowers. We're floral purists in *Harvey Danger*." A Peavey amp and Fender guitar complete this honey rock'n'roll still life.



Couch tip: Nelson relaxes on "my girlfriend's ex-roommate's grandmother's couch," an arresting but tasteful 1970 piece with its original flowered chintz upholstery. "Lots of people have lived on that sofa," he says. "You wouldn't want to lift up the cushions." Nelson has written many a lyric in the comfy blue reading chair, borrowed from bass player Aaron Huffman, who'd borrowed it from his girlfriend. The stuffed puppy, a gift from Nelson's loving mom on his 25th birthday, is the band's current mascot. Lamp by Ikea.

SPIN STYLE

Going home with *Harvey Danger*

Say "home," and the members of *Harvey Danger* are likely to think of a motel room as the place they hang their hats. Ever since their "Flagpole Sitta" single became a summer radio anthem, these Seattle-based neo-new-wavers have been crammed in a van together, staring down miles of hard road. But the band recently spent a welcomed break lounging at the cozy abode shared by vocalist Sean Nelson and drummer Evan Sult, a charming prewar two-bedroom in the Emerald City's Capitol Hill district. While Nelson describes his interior-design aesthetic as "late post-collegiate hypermasculine chic," the apartment was actually decorated by Sult's girlfriend. "She's given it a woman's touch," Nelson says. "She's a woman, and she touched the apartment." SUZANNE MCCLEPHERN

Surf over to keyword: Spin on AOL, as we put *Harvey Danger* through hell for more anti-celebrity tidbits in a SPINonline interview.



Sean can cook: Checked hot pads and a striped apron add down-home flavor to a meal of Van de Kamp's fish sticks, served with a chipotle tartar sauce and garnished with a sprig of tarragon. "Only the best"—that's my motto! Nelson says.



Eat to the beat: In the sun-yellow dining alcove, (from left) Huffman, Sult, Nelson, and guitarist Jeff J. Lin gather round the Formica dining table, an heirloom handed down by Nelson's father. "We enjoy a communal dining experience," says Nelson, "just like the Beatles and the Monkees." Chairs by Ikea.

HUSH HUSH / THE MONTHLY DISH ON THE MUSIC BUSINESS

(continued) the past year from such mainstays as the *Smashing Pumpkins*, *Janet Jackson*, and *Pearl Jam*. In each case, these seemingly sure things led their albums with the least radio-reactive singles of their entire careers, resulting in anemic first-week sales and a serious lack of interest even after the start of U.S. tours. Meanwhile, the Beasties' lead *Hello Nasty* cut—the catchy, electro-inspired "Intergalactic"—became an instant alternative-radio staple. Hip-hop-formatted stations across California and the Southwest, enamored of the album's many old-school sounds, are drawing deeply from the record regardless of the label's attempts to focus radio on one single. It makes you wonder if the main thing wrong with the angst-ridden music biz is the music itself....

Looks like *Mariah Carey* isn't going to become Sony's *Madonna*, as her two-year-old vanity imprint, *Crave*, was recently jettisoned from the Sony family. Some insiders point to lack of focus and excessive spending as primary reasons for the split, while others maintain that it's another step in the disengagement process between Carey and her ex-husband, Sony U.S. chief **Thomas D. Mottola**. Carey recently parted ways

with her Mottola-appointed lawyer, manager, and business manager and has hired a new team. In one odd decision, Carey recruited as *Crave* chief the recently deposed Motown Records head **Andre Harrell**, who fulfilled barely two years of his employment contract with the legendary R&B label before walking with nearly \$25 million. The duo has been shopping *Crave* around, but are being met with cool responses as most companies fear Harrell's notoriously reckless financial management. Look for the diva to drop Harrell and go it alone by the time you read this....

As for other vanity-label turmoil, the buyout battle over *Madonna's* **Maverick Records** continues. Negotiations between *Madonna* and vunderkind **Guy Oseary** on one side, and former Maddy manager **Freddy DeMann** on the other, are being complicated by the artist who made *Maverick* the most successful vanity label in history—**Alanis Morissette**. Rumors are swirling that *Morissette*, whose new album is due in November, is now seeking an equity share in the label, reasoning that she put it on the map and should therefore reap the rewards. And, no, it's not ironic, it's business. **JOE FLEISCHER**



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EXPOSURE 10/98

pg. 63... **ROBBIE FULKS**

pg. 64... **ARE YOU MARILYN MANSON?**

pg. 68... **JACK BRAG**

BROOKER JOE MAKEQUEA

pg. 70... **METAL GEAR SOLID**

THE SPIN 25

STEPHEN HENDREE

pg. 72... **DEADLY DUENDMS**

pg. 74... **LOW-RIDER BIKES**

SUBGENRE ALERT

pg. 76... **MURDER-SITE CLEANUP**

COMBAT ROCK Country rocker Robbie Fulks likes to kick people off. He wears a baseball cap emblazoned with the *National Review* logo because he thinks it'll disturb liberals. And he's got a sweet-as-Mountain Dew anthem on his major-label debut, *Let's Kill Saturday Night*, that taunts organized religion. Which is strange, because the calm and skinny Fulks doesn't look to be itching for a fight.

Fulks's hell-raising began in his hometown of York, Pennsylvania, a former industrial city that he says smells "like crack cocaine, Peppermint Patties, and bluegrass music." After high school came a child out of wedlock, followed by his girlfriend leaving town with the kid. He was 24 and he could see his future all too clearly: "a fat middle-age guy in a trailer with a mortgage." That's when he got serious about songwriting.

Let's Kill Saturday Night is about making up for lost time. It's all-country because of all the garage-punk guitar Fulks plays, and because he careers in so many directions. "Pretty Little Poison," a duet with Lucinda Williams, is a skyrocket, but then there's "Take Me to the Paradise," which brings Me to a stop with its carefully observed look at an archaic boho café. He's playing blue-collar music for a middle-class audience, and don't think he ignores the irony. "I just know, the way I dress, the kind of stuff I play, I'm never gonna play at the State Fair in Omaha," Fulks says, lashing a blue-ribbon smile. "It makes more sense for me to play for a younger, urban audience. I don't know what that says about my music, other than I play for pampered rich kids." Wanna fight? **—J. SMITH**



Fulks: started
foaming at
the mouth
seconds later.

Rock stars: Has the ongoing infatuation with effeminate trappings left you confused about your gender? Or perhaps, has it even left you confused as to which calculatedly sexually ambiguous-yet-still-mas-macho rock star you are? If so, let this reference guide show you the way.



You're Rob
Zombie.

Do you have an excess of
sailor-style tattoos or sometimes
dress like a cop?

You're
Henry
Rollins.



You're a
member of Girls
Against Boys.



Clearly, you're
Michael
Stipe.



Are you
regally svelte?

Do you go
wet-look crazy?

You're in
Nashville
Pussy.

Was the Indian your
favorite Village Person?

Have you ever done
that *Silence of the Lambs*
thing with your penis?

Are you exceptionally
fond of crushed velvet?

Red
crushed
velvet?

Do you wear those pants
that are tight in the ass, but
insouciantly low-riding?

Does a cowboy hat make you
feel naughty, like an outlaw?

You're
Ozzy.

You're
Thom Yorke.



You're the
Artist.



You're Jarvis
Cocker.



You're in
Metallica.

Have you ever done a duet
with acclaimed chanteuse
Marianne Faithfull?

You're
David
Hasselhoff.

You're Tricky



You could
only be Trent
Reznor.



Have you unironically worn or
lyrically fetishized latex, leather,
chain mail, or PVC fetish wear?

Are you
black?

Do you look
amazing in
a sarong?

You're
Maxwell.

Do you think wearing
ripped fishnets on your arms
is soooo two-years-ago?

Have you ever
worn a hoop or
pirate-style earring?

Are you the dude
from Rammstein?

You're the dude
from Rammstein.

Have you ever frenched Anthony Kiedis while
wearing a hoop or pirate-style earring?

You're
Dave
Navarro.



You're the singer
from Gravity Kills.



You're Rob
Thomas.

Have you ever worn Billy Corgan
as a fashion accessory?

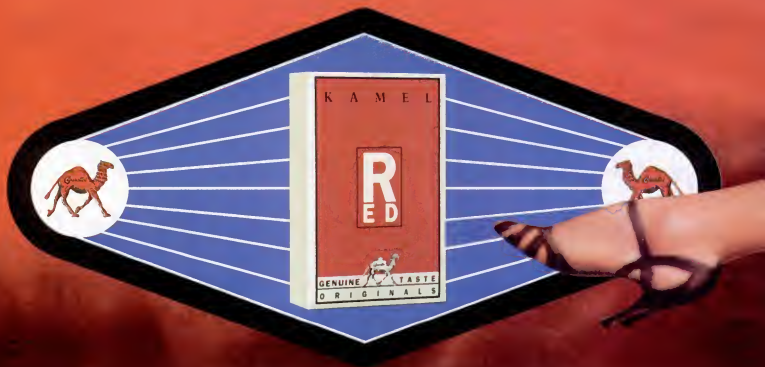
You are Marilyn
Manson. It is so.



Are you so unquestionably, inscrutably, overwhelmingly secure with your sexual
identity and overall general rockiness that feather boas, eyeliner, cats, silver
trousers, face paint, and practicing yoga doesn't faze you in the slightest?

You're Billy
Corgan.





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BAZOOKA JOE MAKEOVER



Sound boy three: Jack Drag, from left, John Dragonetti, Jason Sutter, and Joe Klompus.

For a group of ancient sound boys, the Dragsters+Dragonnetti, bassist Joe Klompus, and drummer Jason Sutter—also surprisingly all-American stoner types who bonded, strangely enough, over a mutual affection for U2's B3 ("To this day, it's one of my favorite records of all time," says Sutter. "And I love U2.") are thinking about recording another version of *Dope Box* under the name Gods of Thunder, and they occasionally go semi-acoustic as Lo-Jack. Such fireless twinking does have its benefits, though. Dope Box's finest moment, the sing-along sampler "See'm So Tired," is assembled from pieces of the band's original take, a remix by the Automator, and yet another midswim by Master Cylinder. The track might just establish Jack Drag as the rare newcomer to put the modern back in modern rock, but Dragonnetti, for his part, has grander ambitions—like getting a soundproof room of his own. "I could go and make loud noise at three in the morning," he says, adding sensitive-guy style, "without waking up my girlfriend!" DOUGLAS HOLK

LAS WOLK

Bursting the white-bread bubble:
new buds Kara and A.J.

[illegible]



BOKEEM WOODBINE, ACTOR

BEVERLY HILLS  POLO CLUB

EXPOSURE

METAL GEAR SOLID
THE SPIN 23
STEPHEN HENDREE



GEAR HEAD If videogame developers did suspense as well as they do gore, fewer games would be just slick eye candy. They might even be, like, interesting. Such is the aim of *Metal Gear Solid*, the mega-hyped, mega-budgeted Sony PlayStation title from Japanese visionary Hideo Kojima. The game, set to be released this month, has a simple premise: In a shadowy Alaskan outpost, the Fashound Navy Seals, a squad of generically refined special agents, are threatening to set off nuclear Armageddon. As Solid Snake, a former Fox, you've got 24 hours to put the kibosh on the renegade upstarts. In its beta version at least, *Metal Gear* plays like

Michael Mann doing a post-Cold War epic. With a cast of 20 dialogue-enabled characters and a 100,000-word script (no joke) guiding the action, there are enough plot twists and moral ambiguity to make you care how it all turns out. (The story line also indulges such adult pursuits as smoking and sexual intrigue, although not at the same time.) Moreover, the stylized realism absolutely dusts the likes of *Quake*. The look is truly 3-D, with "solid" polygon characters you can view from multiple angles. Other boffo effects and game play that values cunning over gunning amount to a thriller that's the stone-cold real deal. **DAVID KUSHNER**



Guns! Intrigue!
Boffo effects:
scenes from the
superb *Metal
Gear Solid*.

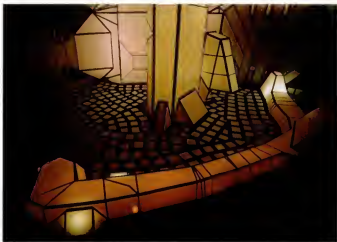
THE SPIN 25 OCTOBER 1998

THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH	ARTIST TITLE	MOVIES ON CHART
1	—	HOLDING YOUR BOSOMS IN THE COOL, COOL SURF ☆ SEE PAGE 92	1
2	21	RUN-DMC.C. DON'T CALL IT A COMEBACK	2
3	21	NEW HOLE UP ☆ BRILLIANT OR CRAP? SPIN STAFF STILL VIOLENTLY DIVIDED	3
4	—	DEE JAY PUNK-ROC FLOSSIN'	1
5	3	THE TALKING CAT FROM SABRINA THE TEENAGE WITCH NEVER GETS OLD	9
6	—	GEAR DUDE?	1
7	22	MAXIM ☆ DUDE!	13
8	—	EBAY.COM CRAZY ASS HYPE	1
9	—	CHRIS TUCKER THE NEXT EDDIE MURPHY	1
10	6	PEACE DON'T CALL IT A COMEBACK	113
11	2	THE AGONY OF DEFEAT, THE THRILL OF LEO DICAPRIO VISITS THE BEDSIDE OF FALLEN GOODWILL GAMER	51
12	24	SEMEN > SUDDENLY EVERYWHERE	14
13	—	GLAM ROCK REVISIONISM MARC BOLAN > SUPERGENIUS!	1
14	17	TURNING AN ALMOST-CLEVER THREE-MINUTE SKIT INTO AN ALMOST-CLEVER 90-MINUTE MOVIE > A NIGHT AT THE ROXBURY, YOU'RE ON THE QUEST LIST	94
15	23	MEDIA COVERAGE OF JENNIFER LOPEZ'S ASS EXTENSIVE	2
16	—	ORGAZMO'S DIAN BACHAR ☆ NOT JUST ANYONE LOOKS GOOD WITH HEAD DILDO	1
17	—	IMAX 3-D MAD FLOSSIN'	1
18	—	ARROGANCE IN THE GUISE OF HUMILITY (SEE BILLY CORGAN!)	1
19	8	TALKING ABOUT YOUR PORN HABIT BETTER THAN AA	22
20	10	FUTURAMA TROUBLE ON THE SET?	2
21	17	MAKING FUN OF MORE SUCCESSFUL MAGAZINES THAN YOURS MAAAAD FLOSSIN'	2
22	25	MUPPET-LIKE VOICES THE BEST THING ABOUT SEAN LEWIS: THE GIRL FROM PARTY OF FIVE, NAT MURUGLIA, ETC.	4
23	—	ERNEST BORGININE DON'T CALL IT A COMEBACK	1
24	23	JAWS IN ROCK/HOT TOPIC (AT LEAST) THREE FORTHCOMING BOOKS	42
25	—	FANTASY ISLAND CALL IT A COMEBACK	344

1: a reference to Corbin's surprise at recent backlist album sales
 ☆ Biggest gainer this month ♦ Pacesetter ☆ Hot Shot Debut



Living in Oblivion Artist Stephen Hendee has seen the future, and in his latest dreamed-up world, "Vaulted," it looks a lot like an ice cave on the far-off planet Mu. The space, built out of foamboard and fluorescent lights, is one of several low-tech environments in which the 30-year-old Hendee envisions not so much what's in store for us beyond the year 2000, but how we'll feel when we get there. A member of the brainiac school of art (he once did a sculpture based on a complex digital program used by the military), Hendee taps techno music, the novels of Philip K. Dick, and Syd Mead—the set designer for *Blade Runner*—to turn out ambient spaces that are hardly chill-out rooms (one especially eerie passageway is aptly named "Oblivion"). Hendee's latest obsession, nano-molecular technology, pops up in his current project, a group of weirdly alluring robot sculptures that will be shown this month at the Bronwyn Keenan Gallery in New York City. So how does Hendee himself feel about the next century? "I'm fascinated by a lot of the ideas," he says, "but I feel ambivalent, too. Things could get pretty awful." **DARCEY STEINKE**



Anti-chill-out rooms: top, "Vaulted"; above, "This Evening's Web Cast Live From Oblivion."

EXPOSURE

DEADLY VENOMS

KILLER QUEEN BEES There aren't any "bitch beats" on the Deadly Venoms' debut album, as rapper Finesse likes to call the soft, R&B-flavored production that currently holds the Top 40 by the throat. As if. With professional (and spiritual) guidance from the Wu-Tang Clan, and beats from members of the Poison Clan, the four Venoms—Finesse, N-Tyce, J-Boo, and Champ MC—come out kicking with lines such as, "Whoever want it raw, bring it / If you got the sword, then swing it." Below, they make their message clear: Sleep on their skills at your own risk. **CHEO HODARI COKER**

1. FINESSE "You can't be jiggy 24 hours a day," says Finesse, sitting with her hair wrapped in curlers in the Los Angeles apartment the group shares. "I caught some of my cutest niggas going to the store looking toe-up." The de facto leader of the clique, the tenor MC has been at it since 1987, when she was one half of the female rap duo Finesse and Synquus. Her secret passion: to write an R&B song. "I love men," she says. "I be sad because they don't be acting right, so I gotta get that [stuff] off, too."

2. N-TYCE This Greensboro, North Carolina, native did a solo stint with Wild Pitch Records in the early '90s, and like Champ and Finesse, she has a score to settle with her former label. "They are gonna look back at us and say, 'Damn, I had raw talent and I let it go,'" she predicts. "Like Jonet Jackson says, 'You don't know what you got till it's gone.'"

3. J-BOO The clique's smoothest topper started rhyming as a kid in New York City's Queensbridge Houses, the fertile rap soil that spawned the likes of Nas, Mobb Deep, and members of the legendary Juice Crew. About the group's namesake: It's from the Show Brothers' kung fu classic *Five Deadly Venoms*. J-Boo says the character she most identifies with is the Snake. "I'm always on the low," says the *Method Woman* with a sly smile, "waiting to attack."

4. CHAMP MC The crew's Sticky Fingaz. Champ likes to get her bitch on: "Do whatever I got to do for my cheddar," she sings in "Bomb Threat," "even if it means I have to bury yo." From the Bronx by way of everywhere ("I done run through mad boroughs"), the former solo artist sums up the Venoms thusly: "We pretty thugs," she says. "We go with the baggies, the fitted, the skirts, all that, and we still raw. Hard to the core."



PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/GETTY IMAGES; STYLING: JASON GRIFFIN/GETTY IMAGES; MAKEUP BY JESSIE OF ELEGANT MILK; HAIR BY WIG FROM LAMON WASHINGTON; SET DESIGN BY BOY

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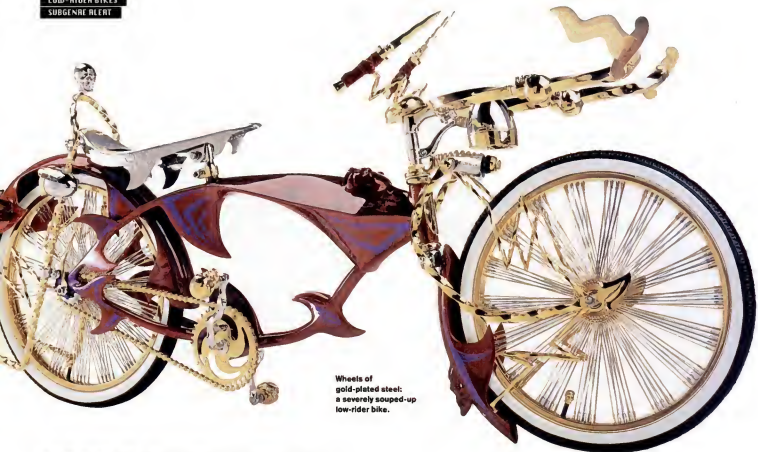
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EXPOSURE

LOW-RIDER BIKES

SUBGENRE ALERT



Wheels of gold-plated steel: a severely souped-up low-rider bike.

ON THE DOWN LOW Before the Schwinn Sting-Ray went extinct in 1979, East L.A. teens such as Armando M. Avila would jam the curved fork of one trashed bicycle into another, chop down the seat post, and add a tiny wheel up front. "It was like a real Hell's Angels deal," recalls Avila. "We'd bend the sissy bar in back [of the seat] to form a scraper, so when you'd pop a wheelie, there'd be sparks." It was also the onset of what's now the hottest thing on two wheels: low-rider bikes. According to legend, the original custom 'Ray actually belonged to Eddie Munster: a cruiser built entirely from chain-link steel that was created for the TV wolfboy by custom-car king George Barris. Latinos were the first to pick up on the bikes, but in the past few years, remodeling the banana-seat classic has become a nationwide hobby for kids too young to customize their own Chevy Impalas. Contests are regularly held for the most radically souped-up versions, and, as with anything old-school, the Japanese fetishize them. ("They buy everything they can get their hands on," says Avila.) Now a staffer at the five-year-old *Lowrider Bike* magazine, Avila has watched the low-rider phenomenon evolve from the days when bikes were mostly scavenged. "Now a show-ready bike can cost anywhere from \$1,500 to \$15,000," he says, almost all of it for labor and mail-order accessories such as velour seats, 144-spoke rims, and, of course, chrome-plated everything. And while the original 'Ray is still the chariot of choice for aficionados, an even lower low-rider could be on the horizon. "Tricycles," says Avila, "are the next big thing." **DAVID A. GREENE**

SUBGENRE ALERT

INDUSTRY'ALL

High Concepts In an era of PalmPilots and rewritable CDs, Casioles and Moogs seem about as quaint as banjos and mandolins. Thus roots rockers, in their never-ending quest to recapture an ever-receding past, have added a little button-punchin' and gimmacin' to their pickin' and grinnin'.

Sounds Like: Robert Johnson goes down to the crossroads and hitches a ride on the autobahn.

Suggested Song Titles: "My Old Kentucky Homepage," "Campfirestarter," "Weary Blues

From Waitin' [For This MP3 File to Download]"

Sees Johnny Dawd, Wrong Side of Memphis (Checkered Past); Melons, Me (Quarantick); Loftus (Penhabable); Callone (Flydaddy)

Steampunk Ratings: 8 Pleating neither the Nashville faithful (who have no interest in a coal-powered Kraftwerk) nor the techno masses (who have no interest in what Wilco would sound like hooked up to Ethernet cables), industry all seems fated for a cult audience—just like roots rock! **JEFF SALOMON**

PHOTO: MATT MULLER

#10 "FLINT"

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EXPOSURE

MURDER SITE CLEANUP



Don't mind the maggots: Smither, right, gets to work on a killing floor; far right, a crew member's eye-catching find.

CARNAGE CORPS A grisly murder has gone down in an apartment on the second floor. Now that the cops and the coroner have split, who's going to clean up the mess? Such gruesome business is the niche market of the Bay Area-based Crime Scene Cleaners Inc. Industiously capitalizing on the fear of blood-borne pathogens such as Hepatitis C and AIDS, CSC is one of a growing number of companies that specialize in scrubbing away blood, brains, and other hard-to-get-out spots at violent-death sites. Although business is booming—the seven-man crew had 200 jobs last year—big-time carnage cleanup, as detailed below, isn't all fun and profit. “The key,” says CEO Neal Smither, a 31-year-old ex-surfer who looks like he should still be renting out Jet Skis, “is being able to stand in a pool of blood, with maggots crawling up your boots, and do it.” **VANCE BISSER**

Throw Out the Furniture Outfitted in a waterproof body-suit, kitchen gloves, gardening boots, and a respirator to keep out the smell, Smither and Co. swab up the biggest puddles of miscellaneous fluids with heavy-duty paper towels, then dump them, along with body tissue and bloodied house stuffs, into biohazard disposal bags. After everything is bagged, it's a basic spray'n'vac job with the ominously named Extractor, a combination vacuum/spray-blower loaded with a pathogen neutralizer commonly used in hospitals. Ever mindful, Smither recommends that the victim's family toss out gore-spattered furniture. “If you sit on the couch Dad killed himself on, it may be clean,” he points out, “but it's a reminder.”

In Search of Brain Matter For CSC, no job is too big, or too bloody, but shotgun suicides pose especially nasty problems. “The brains and blood just get all over the room,” says Smither. “Half the job is just finding it all.” On one such job,

some of the victim's cranial matter had to be scooped out of a chandelier. Another time, Smither's crew was called back after the guy's housemate found a pile of brains they had missed in a dark corner. Far worse, however, was a suicide who lay undiscovered for three months. By then, the decomposing head had fused with the wall, and rats, maggots, and flies had begun to nosh on the putrefying corpse. “It took us seven hours to clean up,” says Smither. “It was god-awful.”

Serving the Public The crew's \$375 minimum fee is usually covered by a county agency or homeowner's insurance, although sometimes they'll clean up a site for free, as Smither recently volunteered to do for a local family whose son was accidentally shot by a friend. It's all part of good public relations. “By the time we leave, the family is hugging and thanking us. That's what I want,” he says. “It's like, ‘Hey, I'm sorry your son killed himself, but I'm sure glad you have my phone number.’”



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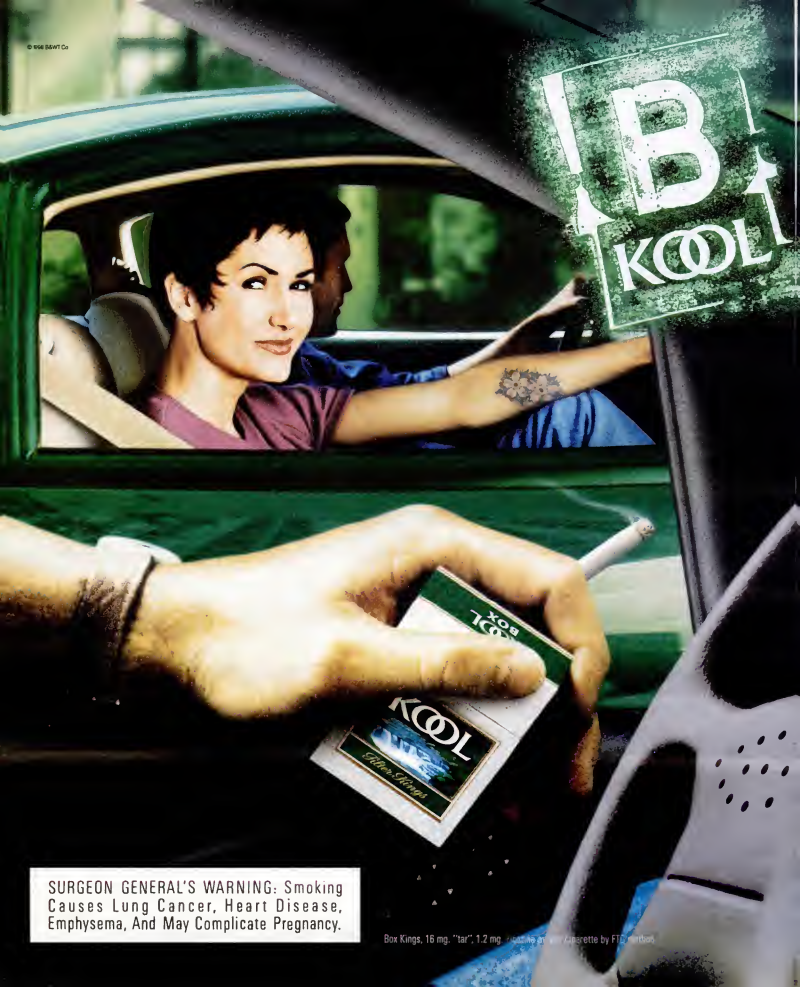
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Framed: Pecker (Edward Furlong, here with Christina Ricci) becomes the art world's hot, new gritty-photographer sensation.

1 MOVIES

TO PECKER AND THE END OF JOHN WATERS

With *Pecker*, the master of gleeful incompetence and sicko iconoclasm drifts perilously close to irrelevance. by Bob Davis

With *Pecker*, director John Waters, the man who brought scratch-and-sniff sweat socks (Odorama) and a 300-pound transvestite leading lady (Divine) to your local midnight-movie house, shows remarkable restraint—and that's just the fourth of 17 principal reasons the movie fails. Waters needs to fix his clock or get out of the "twisted" business altogether. It's 1998: the *Jerry Springer Show*, *Forgive or Forget*, *Fox Files*, shock-media overload. A granny who chats with a plastic, pint-size Virgin Mary isn't going to cut it, unless the Virgin Mary suggests granny molest retarded, paraplegic stepchildren.

A cross between Leonardo DiCaprio and Pee-wee Herman, young Pecker (Edward Furlong) wears a permanent grin on his face and a thrift-store camera around his neck. He believes art "is what you see every day," snaps candida of his beloved low-rent Baltimore: a glucose-junkie's syrupy drool; white cotton "teabags" in a male

strip joint; girlfriend Shelly (Christina Ricci), his girlfriend and local fluff-and-fold Hitler; Mom in rollers; Dad behind morning paper; horny rats in garbage; and so on. When Pecker exhibits his work in a local burger palace-cum-gallery, New York art dealer Rorey (Lili Taylor) happens to pop by and, what do you know, soon a stereotypically Fellini-esque art-world establishment whispers "Diane Arbus." Whitney Museum curators plan A Peek at Pecker, and boy wonder gets a large-format Hasselblad.

Understandably, Pecker's near-and-dear don't appreciate being labeled "delicious" and "culturally challenged" in national magazines; "some people," they grumble, "just don't feel like being art." And so Pecker must decide between fame and family. New York and Baltimore, Rorey and Shelly, zoom lens and fished.

Quirky? Dysfunctional? Probably, but it's hardly outrageous. Twenty-five years ago Waters mattered. He pushed the limits of taste, made sicko iconoclasm >>

MOVIES CONTINUES



MOVIE > Strike (DIRECTED BY SARA KERMOSHIAN) The girls at Miss Godard's Prep School are pissed: The Board of Directors wants to merge with St. Ambrose School...for Boys. Yuck! So the young scholar/poet/activists put on their thinking caps, occupy the campus. The girls decry patriarchalism, demand autonomy, assert gender uniqueness, while re-creating, beat for beat, scenes from a festival of boyish coming-of-age movies. It's Dead Poets Society + Taps, with budding breasts. In the end, even the most radical ball-basher finds her inner nanny. "Boys," she rationalizes, "are like dogs; if you don't take them in, they'll run wild." Who ever would've thought a celebration of chick-power could be so dull? **BOB DAVIS**

<< Feminine touch: The schoolgirls of *Strike* strike a pose.

2 MEDIA

DAVID STERN, YO!

Slam, the hip-hop sports mag, tells the unbelievable truth: Basketball—gaspi—is black. by Zev Borow

This past October, the National Basketball Association's image police went into crisis mode after seeing the latest issue of *Slam*, the much-hyped four-year-old magazine that purports to cover "basketball and its culture." The issue in question features a cover shot of the Minnesota Timberwolves' wunderkind duo Kevin Garnett and Stephon Marbury, both sporting ripped-up jerseys, thick

gold medallions, and thousand-mile gaudy stares. Alongside them ran the Nas-inspired headline: SHOWBIZ AND KG. MARBURY & GARNETT RULE THE WORLD. IMAGINE THAT.

If you didn't know any better, and the NBA assumes you don't, you could have mistaken the two for soldiers in Master P's No Limit posse. Not exactly what the league considers proper branding. "[The NBA] thinks we made them out to look like hoods," says Dennis Page, *Slam*'s publisher. Adds Editor-in-Chief Tony Germino, "The first thing Stephon and Kevin asked [at the shoot] was if they

could rip their sleeves and wear their jewels. That's who these guys are. And that's what our readers want."

And, indeed, that's what they get. Billing itself as "The In Your Face Basketball Magazine," *Slam* marks the glossy-paged, synergistic merger of hip-hop and basketball. By covering hoops plays-lovin' baller athlete hip-hop grammar hearty included, the monthly has engendered a cultish devotion among its youngish (mostly under 24), urban-oriented (if not actually urban), and mostly white (of course) readers. But *Slam*, which has a circulation of 200,000, is notable for

more than its deft targeting of teenagers who can't decide whether they want to be Michael Jordan or Puff Daddy. In an era when both hip-hop and basketball have become more aggressive and more aggressively race-conscious, *Slam*'s defining insight is that basketball is, at its core, black. Duh, you might think, but consider the image that's promoted by the leagues and Nike, basketball's self-appointed corporate parent. Even when the anklester giant is getting down with the game's street-cred soul, as in a recent series of entertaining TV spots about "giving the >>

MEDIA CONTINUES

3 BOOKS

GOT POETRY?

Or why it matters in the age of Jewel. by Dennis Cooper

Folk-rocker Jewel sits on a high stool, cushiony lit by a single, pale overhead spotlight. The camera pans in and she begins to speak, but not in that low-key, chatty way familiar to her multitude of fans. Instead, there's an odd rhythm to her sentences, and what she says makes very little sense, although it seems to mean a lot to her. "I am not from here / And my hair smells of the wind / And I am full of constellations / As I move about the world."

If you spent anytime channel surfing

this past summer, it was difficult to avoid the aforementioned image as Jewel made the rounds promoting her first book of poetry, *A Night Without Armor*. As I see it, there were three possible ways to think about these appearances: (a) Poetry ugh. (b) Jewel is so multitalented. And (c) What has poetry done to deserve this? Chances are (c) wasn't the most popular response. In fact, it's likely that most people watching didn't have the slightest idea what separates a great poem from a mediocre one, and probably think the question is irrelevant. Let me add that most people don't know what they're talking about.

Could there be a more mongrel art



Satanic Verses?: poet-wannabe Jewel.

form than contemporary poetry? Even those of us who love the stuff would have hard pressed to explain why it deserves your attention. Still, a case needs to be made for it—especially now. No other art form is more concise, self-contained, and geared to the diminishing attention spans of the computer age. You want tech? Poetry is nothing but linguistic puzzles, trickery, and daredevil feats, but, unlike computer games and megabuck films, its special effects have a soul to match, not to mention that the average poem takes up no more air space than the average joke. Altogether, there's just no good reason why poetry books shouldn't be Barnes & >>

BOOKS CONTINUES

1 > MOVIES CONTINUED



Acquired taste: Waters on the set of *Pecker*.

Stone and Trey Parker in *BASEball*. *Pecker*'s preteen sugar fiend, reduced to zombie status by a fascist Child Protection Agency's Ritalin patrol, is not unamusing, but it can't compete. History is a bitch.

So while the studios strip-mine the underground's material, Waters drifts toward the mainstream, makes more and more story-driven, less and less fun genre films—

the relatively diverting *Hairpray*, an ironic early-'60s-style teen musical, with a super-helthy Ricki Lake instead of Annette Funicello; the less-than-diverting *Cry-Baby*, an ironic early-'80s-style teen musical, with a graced Johnny Depp instead of Elvis. *Serial Mom*, an ironic murder mystery in which the mother (Kathleen Turner) knocks off whomever offends her ultra-conservative sense of family values; and now *Pecker*, a probably not-ironic (auto-)biopic and apology pro *sue arte*. The problem is Waters sucks at mainstream. Pedro Almodóvar, the flamboyant Spaniard whose filmography, like Waters's, runs from drag shock-fest (*Pepi, Luci, Bom*) to mainstream-garre parody (*Live Flesh*), learned how to make movies along the way, understood that a snappy pace and narrative, a plot structure pushed toward the absurd (ridiculous coincidences, exaggerated conventions) can be fun. Waters's plots poke along, leisurely at best, and, as *Serial Mom*—the first 20 minutes (the set-up, the idea) of which is humorous, the rest (the execution of the plot) torture—augments and *Pecker* confirms, Waters has been a bad schoolboy. He's not mastered his Aristotle, his Hitchcock, or even his Hollywood. And you've got to know how something works in order to mock it. What does work in the most-but-still-not-very >>

MOVIES CONTINUES



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BOOK > *Filth* by IRVINE WELSH [J.W. NORTON] Irvine Welsh has a knack for fingering cool-culture hot spots while pisa-taking relentlessly on the Brit revival. Which is exactly what he should be doing, because—unlike fellow Scottish brutalist James Kelman—Welsh is a lousy writer. Displaying the same obsession with Schedule 1 drugs that's prevalent in Welsh's canonical work (*Trainspotting*, *The Acid House*, *Ecstasy*), *Filth* misguidedly wanders off from chubland to explore the coal-black soul of ogre cop Bruce Robertson. We get 330 pages of what a creep he is (first clue: likes heavy metal), and then an incidentally hilarious emasculation: He had a bad childhood. Other comic aspects include pointless yet constant references to Freemasonry and occasional narration by a tapeworm ("The urge to hurt, demean, and control is great in you"). Surprising plot turns and moral complexity draw nill-nill. How late it was, how late. **JOSHUA CLOVER**

2 > MEDIA CONTINUED



It will: slamming the NBA's rainbow coalition.

game back to the kids," that soul is represented by a rainbow coalition of natty dressed players. And while the NBA pushes the notion that modern-day hoops is all about Michael Jordan-esque race transcendence, *Slam* contends that the

game's spirit is inseparable from the young and overwhelmingly black, men who dominate it. Namely, the hip-hop-loving, trash-talking, No Limit soldier-walking Kevin Garnett.

Conceived and originally published by Harria Publications, the company behind the hip-hop lifestyle organ *XXL* (last May the title was sold to Petersen Publishing for an undisclosed amount), *Slam* talks the talk, as it were, and routinely gets basketball's best young talent to do the same. Instead of the made-for-middle-American-consumption, third-person-speak perfected during pregame chats with Bob Costas, we get players letting

loose as if they were talking to one of their boys. Here's Garnett in *Slam* on the T-Wolves' future: "Shit is about to be ours.... Soon you're going to have five men bringing the ball up, all with crazy handles.... Yo, big shout-out to the WNBA and ABL, oh my God!"

And where else could you read a profile of the NBA's whitest boy, Christian Laettner, that begins with a writer (in this case, *Slam* Editor-at-Large Scoop Jackson) matter-of-factly stating, "I'm racist.... There is no excuse, no explanation.... I have a tendency not to like some white people simply because they are...white." Laettner, the writer later

concedes, turns out to be "a light."

In fact, *Slam* finds pretty much everyone a light. It has been described as the "People of basketball," and its player profiles, on everyone from prep-schoolers to pro women, are often similarly shallow and fawning. "We're not out there to break people down," admits Germino. "We don't care who they are or race models, as long as they can ball." Such court-centric focus (the magazine is composed almost exclusively of profiles) also explains why *Slam* doesn't tackle the numerous non-basketball issues surrounding the game, such as players' sexual practices and the recent rumors >>

3 > BOOKS CONTINUED

Noble's meat and potatoes.

Of course, there's little chance this will ever happen. Blame the rise of identity politics back in the '80s, which transformed many poets into self-styled spokesmen for their particular race, gender, or sexual orientation. Certainly, that subverted an already minuscule audience. Maybe it was because major-league performers such as Jewel and Lou Reed confused the book-buying public with their poetry tie-ins. No does it help that independent bookstores are a vanishing species, and that trying to buy poetry in chain stores is like trying to buy electronics at Wal-Mart. Yet all it takes to cut through the naysaying is to read one terrific book.

Take, for instance, Elaine Equi. Never heard of her? Equi, and her husband, poet Jerome Sala, became regular fixtures in poetry circles back in the early '80s as two stylish punks whose readings regularly would erupt into brawls between the inebriated pair and their equally inebriated audience. Some ten-odd years later, Equi and Sala are still around, although far more quiet, and they have a devoted following among those disenfranchised poetry junkies who neither care a lick about the yawn-provoking canon, nor haunt the coffee houses in search of woelessly earnest lyrical shouts. The author of four books, most recently *Decoy* (Coffeehouse Press), Equi might be characterized as a

kind of intelligent ambient poet, as supple, layered, and sneaky in her own way as, say, Aphex Twin. Her work does what poetry should do, yet very rarely does—make you feel the sensations inherent in words and their combinations, while simultaneously throwing down a savvy personal challenge.

"Years Later"

Today is woven / out of a marvelous / synthetic fabric / which we have not discovered / and have no name for. / Light, cool, porous / like skin, only transparent. / I remember when / I use to think love / meant being surrounded / by plastic hula-girls / and wind-up poodles in a place where nothing was real / except



Sneaky Shuff.

our feeling. / The obvious authenticity of them—why / I so important?

Granted, Equi's brainy razzle-dazzle may not be for everyone. But it is the real thing, the kind of poetry Jewel is at least trying to write. To take a very different example, consider Ron Koertge. A one-time protégé of Charles Bukowski, he's a living legend in certain West Coast circles, and his witty, badass work has had a huge influence on such younger writers as Bob Flanagan, Amy Gerstler, and myself, to name a handful. Point is, Koertge's >>

BOOKS CONTINUED

1 > MOVIES CONTINUED

commercial films of the late-'60s-early-'70s underground has as much to do with how they were made as with their freak parades. In cult masterpieces like *Lonesome Cowboys* and *Flesh*, genius-artist Andy Warhol feigned the amateur, manufactured static compositions, long takes, in-camera editing to evoke the home movie. Waters's first films—*Monty Python* (1966), *Multiple Maniacs* (1970), and *Pink Flamingos* (1972)—were home movies. His shoddy technique—he shot the films himself—seemed to be less an affection (or, as an academic critic might put it, a rejection of classical narrative) than just plain incompetence. An incompetence that, along with the sense that the "actors" were not so much acting as half being themselves and half trying



Call of the mill: Pecker's Ricci.

to keep from laughing, made Waters's movies, for a generation that was disillusioned by the crumbling facade of '50s moralism, way more real than even Brando's realist realism. Now Waters has a professional crew. Mom is right. They don't make 'em like they used to.

What works in Pecker are Pecker's still photos. Because they don't move, don't speak, don't emote, these pictures are immune to Waters's deficiencies as a screenwriter and director. Because they're sometimes blurry, black-and-white, candid, they contrast with the competent, bland look of the rest of the film. Pecker wouldn't work under that if he "knew how to make them any better, they probably wouldn't work."

Another lesson Pecker's creator himself seems not to have grasped. At movie's end, Pecker, his friends, and his smile restored, is asked what he's going to do next. "I'm thinking of directing a movie," he says, and we can only hope it's as good (bad) as his photos. Rory—she's moved on to champion a New Jersey photographer, blind, who chants, "No more focus, no more f—stamps!"—proposes a toast, the last and best line of the film: "To Pecker and the end of irony."

Apparently, it's already happened. ■

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MOVIE > *The Last Big Thing* (DIRECTED BY DAN ZUKOVIC) In the film *The Last Big Thing*, L.A.'s hippest new glossy zine (titled *The Next Big Thing*) doesn't actually exist. Simon Geist, bogus NBT editor, loathes the culture of instant "genius," advertisement as "art," retro-hip TV such as *The Beverly Hillsbillies*, and sets off to interview soap stars, models, and rockers solely to mock their shallowness for his own gratification. But in the end, Geist (like writer/director Dan Zukovic) is revealed a fraud, a wannabe actor/musician/icon who par-lays failure into an attack on pop culture. *The Last Big Thing* joins the queue of Hal Hartley-ish pseudointellectual poses that make even the staunchest highbrow feel icky and long for Jethro and Ely May. **A-.**

<< Screaming for vengeance: Dan Zukovic and Susan Heim binder share their views on pop culture.

2 > MEDIA CONTINUED

about widespread marijuana use in the league. "The drug thing in particular," says Garvino, "is just something we don't think our readers care about."

More notably, Page and Gervino (both of whom are white) stick to the fiction that *Slam* is "colorless." This may be little more than lip-service to twitzy advertisers, but it also sells the magazine short. Contributor Jackson states the obvious: "Of course basketball is black. You can't get around that. And of course that's a big part of the soul and flavor of the magazine."

As it is a big part of the recently launched, and doubtlessly *Slam*-inspired, *Source Sports*, a quarterly put out by the

Source. Armed with the tag line, "Our Athletics. Our Voice," it's too black sports coverage through the prism of black culture. (One notable difference: The magazine ran a story about NBA pot heads in its premiere issue.)

While it isn't likely that the "soul and flavor" pioneered by *Slam* will ever dominate the ily-white sports magazine universe, it does chip away at the racial whitewash that typifies coverage of the game. Basketball today is hip-hop, and hip-hop is black. *Slam*'s recognition of that fact feels at least a little like progress. "We're just trying to represent without fronting," says Jackson. Why, yes. **B-**

4 VIDEO



WHEN THEY WERE BAD

BEAT GIRL (BUZZARD ENT.), EXPRESSO BONGO (BUZZARD ENT.)

With the teen-movie genre now stuck in its newly revamped formulaic rut (ironic slasher + smirky kid from WB series + Third Eye Blind on soundtrack + hit), the recent video rereleases of two films set in London's late-'50s boho rock scene offer a return to a simpler, more scandalized view of adolescence. In the boy-centric *Expresso Bongo*, Cliff Richard plays the title character, a milk-fed rock star who wonders why he's getting tagged as a purveyor of "Oedipus rock" (which, admittedly, does sound vaguely twisted), and is then mortified when his likely virginity becomes a topic of public debate. It all works out in the end for the earnest Bongo, but in *Beat Girl*, the title hottie's sordid impulses have more damning consequences, like near-rape. Curious about her new stepmom's former life as a stripper, *Beat Girl* (played by the Bardot-ish Gillian Hills) breaks with the hipsters at the Off-Beat café and inquires within at the local topless joint. Pretty soon, she's hosting after-hour parties, smoking cloves, and swirling vodka, until Dad discovers her stripping in the living room. Outraged, he yells, "Get out of here, you jiving scum!" and begs her to please keep her clothes on. Such alarmist messages serve a whole new role in today's teen films: They give the pseudo-deconstructionist kids in a *Scream* trip-off something to laugh at. **MAUREEN CALLAHAN**

3 > BOOKS CONTINUED

current marginal status is inarguable proof that poetry itself is not to blame for the fact almost no one reads it. We're not talking about a gifted weirdo here.

Koortge's poetry is practically the definition of what popular American writing would be, if such a thing existed. It's utterly clear, crafted down to the minutest syllable, and alluringly original in its personal approach to everything it

published *Making Love to Roger's Wife* (University of Arkansas Press).

"Coming Out"

of the hospital with the news / that she has a skull like marmalade / and may, at fifteen learn / to talk like a fish, / I look in the window of the store / by the bus stop and see my / open collar / tousled hair / and I think that in another day / or two, when the smudges / under my eyes are even darker, / I will be very, very attractive / indeed.

Koortge's poems are like great singles—catchy and charismatic, with a spooky emotional weight that makes rereading them addictive. Which, in the end, may be the best case for poetry of all. **B-**



Catchy as Henson

the standard-issue weirdness of being in love, the creepiness of suburban life, or the effect of any number of pop-culture icons. Here's a poem from the recently

5 THE MIX DELIVERING THE WORLD IN 323 WORDS OR LESS



Touch of Evil [movie]

1998's most "now" release, Orson Welles's dazzler was made in 1958. Combines sex, drugs, violence, and a visual style that chafes MTV. (October Films)



Giovanni vs. Mecha-Giovanni [Web site]

A monster movie like they used to make monster movies. (www.torgo.com/giovanni)



Hammer time [Infomercial]

MC Hammer has started his own ministry, and has a late-night evangelical infomercial (try BET around 11:30 P.M.) to prove it.



Buddy Faro [TV show]

Armin Farina stars in a deeply weird Rat-Pack-cum-Austin-Powers show. The concept is not how different things are today but how similar. (CBS)



Iron Maiden: Run to the Hills, the Official Biography [book]

Mick Wall's soon-to-be-classic Balls. (HarVill Press)



Certified Renegade American Product [Web site]

The South Park posse heaving "useless lifestyle merchandise... designed to celebrate and exploit our creative endeavors and those of our friends." Lots of strange movie, Orgazmo props, merch, etc. (www.crapcrapcrap.com)



Blue Poigo [book]

Sordid, nearly uncomprehensible story of a Republican magmaker, his gay junkie brother, a road trip, and an Internet video-sex ranch. Oh, and a murder. (Gutter Press)



ego trip, Vol. 4, No. 1 [magazine]

The last hurrah for the world's rarest, stinkiest, laugh-out-loud funniest—and now defunct—magazine about hip-hop. Fare thee well, gentile friends.

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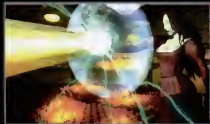


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THE LOVE ISSUE

**SHE'S BEEN CALLED A BITCH, A SELLOUT,
AND A MURDERER.
WITH A LONG-AWAITED HOLE ALBUM FINALLY
HITTING THE STREETS,
COURTNEY IS DEFENDING HER LIFE
BY PHILIP WEISS**

photographs by LUIS SANCHIS







PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE GRANITZ FOR SPIN
FOR PROMOTION INFORMATION, SEE SPIN 93
COURTESY
"I THINK SELF-DESTRUCTIVENESS IS GIVEN A REALLY
BAD RAP. I THINK IT CAN MEAN SELF-REFLECTION, CAN MEAN POETIC
SENSIBILITY, CAN MEAN AN EMPATHY."

Courtney Love was talking about the Vice President.
"He goes, 'I'm a really big fan,' and I was like, 'Yeah, right. Name a song, Al.' I can't name a song, I'm just a really big fan."

"You said that?"

"Yeah, I went to this big fancy producer's house. There were about 14 of us invited to dinner with Al Gore. I'm sitting next to this guy who's like Gore's Stephanopoulos, and I said, 'Why am I here?' Because the only other famous person there was Kevin Costner. He said, 'We've done our research and we want your vote,' and I was just so proud. There are pictures of it. Edward has them. For some reason I looked really wholesome that night, and when the pictures got developed, it's like me and Al, and we're dancing a little and we're fighting. I was throwing my hands at him. And I brought them up to my mother-in-law at Christmas and framed one for her. I was really impressed, which happens very rarely."

Love drew another French cigarette out of the pack on the kidney-shape table. Edward was Edward Norton, the actor with whom she's been linked romantically.

"You're jaded," I said.

"No. Yeah. It's because really early on, living in Los Angeles, when I first hung out with Eric²—Erlendson, Hole's guitarist—"we'd see a famous person and he'd gawk and I'd say, 'Eric, that person is no better than you, don't gawk,' so in order to catapult to where I wanted us to be we had to deal with people that we were really impressed by, like Kim [Gordon] and Thurston [Moore, both of Sonic Youth] or Michael Stipe—you have to be able to shut down and afford that person the consideration that their fame and they are very, very separate. I just learned to do that from an early age."

Love finished the cigarette and got up to go to an alcove, and I heard a blender going, growing through organic vegetables. This was late at night in the greenroom of a recording studio off Times Square in New York City, and she was working on Hole's new record, *Celebrity Skin*. She came back out of the alcove wearing a mustache of green-purple juice. It set off the black, fashionable outfit she had put on to meet with movie people that day.

"Madonna was talking to me about responsibility," she said. "Our responsibilities. And some of what she says I think is a load of hogwash, and some of what she says is true. It's like a 17-year-old girl comes up to you and tells you that she does drugs because you did drugs. I mean that's like a heavy negative social responsibility. How do you alone for that?"

"That girl is doing drugs because she wants to," I said.

Love would have none of this. "I see pictures of how I looked," she said. "It's disgusting. I'm ashamed. There's death and there's disease and there's misery and there's giving up your soul, there's this creaky old-man phenomenon that happens to you. The human spirit mixed with certain powders is not the person, it's the demonic presence."

"If you want to go back to Madonnas for a moment, a quote from *Vanity Fair*: 'She doesn't have a self-destructive bone in her body.' Well, I have many"—Love gave a mope, wheezy laugh—"and I've broken a bunch. I think self-destructiveness is given a really bad rap. I think that self-destructiveness can also mean self-reflection, can mean poetic sensibility, it can mean an empathy, it can mean a hedonism and a libertarianism and a lack of judgment. But when you're living the fantasy of someone else's shadow, you're not light. Everyone's scared of you, you can't really make any friends, they want to have a big Hollywood meeting with you just so they can stare at you for ten minutes. You know what I mean?"

She slumped on the couch and lit a cigarette.

THIS SPRING AND SUMMER, AS HOLE PREPARED THEIR THIRD ALBUM, COURTNEY LOVE WAS UNDER ATTACK EVERYWHERE. The film *Kurt and Courtney* aired accusations that Love played a role in the 1994 death of her husband, Kurt Cobain, and while even filmmaker Nick Broomfield said he didn't believe the claims, they were treated seriously in the press. (A book, published by a fringe press but picked up nationwide, actually suggested she was a prime suspect.) The movie tapped into what appeared to be a widespread hatred of Love. She was a Yoko figure, demonized for sucking the lifeblood from



3

"I THINK IT'D BE GREAT IF CELEBRITY SKIN PISSED A LOT OF PEOPLE OFF." "IT WON'T PISS ANYBODY OFF," LOVE SAID.

She gave me a funny look. "I was joking," she said. "You're so literal—that's tragic."

Kissing ass, Love said.

But the casual flip of her powerful hand across my face in front of everyone was

WE'RE ALL VERY ASTROLOGICALLY AWARE. CANCERS [LIKE COURTNEY] ARE EMOTIONALLY PRIMITIVE, EXPERIMENTAL, WHEREAS PICES [LIKE ME] ARE MORE REFINED EMOTIONAL USERS."



humiliating. As she went on, talking about how she meant the record to be a "masterwork," I began developing a critique of her in my mind. She was big and queenly. Like all ambitious control freaks, she bent others to her will.

Later, Love was gentler. "Darwinism got me through a hard time," she said, loling on the couch. Darwinism could explain drug addiction, Darwinism could explain the chemical of love, Darwinism made Freud look ridiculous.

"Aren't you being reductive?" I said. "It's just a lens for looking at stuff. What about astrology as a lens?" (The band enjoyed zodiacal talk.)

"There's a truth in it, but I sort of stopped after I learned that Harrison Ford and I have the exact same chart," she said. "We're like the only two celebrities with double Cancer."

"Maybe you share qualities."

"Yeah," Love said. "He's a stoic."

CELEBRITY SKIN DOESN'T HAVE THE UNHARNESSED ANGER OF LIVE THROUGH THIS—nothing as awesome as the moment when Love sang of a betrayer, "Come on, take everything / Take everything, I want you to!" on "Asking For It"—but it has mature complexities, an atmosphere of regret and mistakes and disgust. The songs that stayed with you the longest were the deepest, the most felt, the haunting-key and plainly mixed feelings of "Petals" or "Boys on the Radio." In "Boys on

the Radio," there was undying anger and love and contempt, mythic/poetic images of vanity and self-loathing, all interwoven in a pop melody. "In your endless summer night / I'll be on the other side / When you're beautiful and dying / All the world that you've denied / When the water is too deep / ...I will ease your suffering/ ...I know that you are rotten to the core / I know that you don't love me anymore."

A few nights later, Erlandson was eating take-out Chinese, his long body folded on the floor. Love was watching the Biography Channel and puttering away online. "I'm not pregnant," she said to the screen, then asked Erlandson to disengage the computer for her. Love is flaky about those sorts of things—keys, money, and so forth.

I asked them why the album took four years.

She said, "Someone dies [Cobain]. Have a child. Someone dies [bassist Kristen Pfaff]. Do a major movie. Oh, by the way, stop putting things into your body that you've been putting in for, oh, a decade. Umm, gee, I don't know, is that four years? I think that's about four years of your life. I mean it's pretty obvious. I don't care about proflig, I want a body of work that is like, everything was good."

Erlandson said, "That there is so much crap out there that people are putting out—I say, write for yourself, record your music for yourself, but don't put out crap to the public if you know it's not..."

"Be trustworthy," Love interrupted. "If my and Harrison Ford's charts are exactly



"IT'S JUST DRIVE. IT ISN'T MACHINATIONS
AND IT ISN'T SHREWSHNESS. [IT'S]
DARWINISM. I JUST WANT TO SIGNAL
THAT I'M A WORTHWHILE MATE."

alike, the one thing about Harrison Ford I can seem to relate to, you put the product out, you kind of know it's going to have some level of quality to it."

"We had another record in this four years we could have put out, and it was shit," Erlandson said.

"It was self-indulgent," Love said. "It was Plath, it was Sexton, it was shit."

"Thank God we didn't. Why torture the world with another crappy record?"

A man came to the door who was by all appearances Edward Norton and, seeing a reporter, disappeared. Love grabbed Erlandson's acoustic guitar and went out to the hallway. As she did, the body of the guitar clapped hard against a metal folding chair.

"Aaah," Erlandson said, with buffered pain.

When Love came back, the two of them spoke of how they had always wanted Hole to be a mainstream success. "That was our biggest worry back then," Erlandson said of the band's start, "that 'Hole' [the name] could not be a mainstream band, and we wanted to be popular enough and sell enough records."

"But also, when we started out, all I really wanted to do is piss everybody off," Love said.

"I think it'd be great if [*Celebrity Skin*] pissed a lot of people off," Erlandson said.

"It won't piss anybody off," Love said. "It's supposed to provoke thought. There's a good quote. I can only paraphrase it. Ninety-five percent of all popular culture is



pornography, 5 percent creates inspiration, new aesthetic, and grace in people. I'd like to be in that 5 percent, using pop."

Erlendson went into the studio to work, and I brought up Kurt Cobain. My reading of *Celebrity Skin* is that Love has distanced herself from her marriage, that she associates Cobain with dysfunctional behavior, and both pitted him and was angry at him, and was angry at the world of celebrity for being a place he couldn't survive.

The album's bad/great drug song, "Use Once & Destroy," was a dark spiral that came close to confessional. The voice was angry at first: "I went down to rescue you / I want all the way down / I went down for the remains / Sort through all your blurs and stains." Then abruptly it turned painful, loving: "Ooh, I will follow you / Anytime anywhere / Ooh, I will come for you / Just say you aren't there."

Love had said there was a personal subplot in some of the songs, but she was unwilling to decode the messages. "I won't talk about it because it's none of your business," she said simply. "Because you will never know."

"Right now we're talking about the death of your husband?"

"Or whatever, specifically, all of that shit—you will never know what that was like. And you will never know what that person was really like. And you will never ever know the personal truth of that relationship. And I will never exploit it for you. So that's all I have to say about it, you know, and in the beginning, somebody should have looked me in my fucking room for a year."

"But was it helpful to you?" I asked.

She stopped short. "The truth is, it was."

"So why are you lacerating yourself?"

"You're right, it was cathartic, but I think people really took advantage of it. Let me tell you, I gave some of the most amazing performances that people have ever seen, they'll never see stuff like that again. It was like opera. But all I'm saying is that I can't and I won't engage in this kind of deep discussion of that situation because it's...you weren't there. You don't know it's mine, it's mine, and it's already been robbed from me."

Angered, she was vital and present. I kept at it. "Isn't there a way that certain aspects of it are not yours?"

"You know what: I'm concerned with my emotional life."

"But you're a performer, you like things epic."

"That whole other part of it, the mythic element, the archetype element of it, that has nothing to do with my reality. What was mine has been...a lot of it has been stolen from me."

The mistrust that had been underlying the conversation came to the surface. "I don't know how bad your Jones is for this shit," she said, "and I hope it's not huge...it's a gender thing too. I fucking like lived in that shadow and I'm alive and I'm going to live and I'm going to have great romances that are more than that was. I'm not going to live in that fucking shadow, it's not my fucking shadow. I refuse."

At the end, when I'd transcribed nearly 40,000 words of Courtney Love's conversation in files, I did a search for "Kurt." It came up twice, both times Kurt Weill.

IN MARCH, LOVE WENT TO LOS ANGELES, AND SOON AFTER, *CELEBRITY SKIN*'S release was put off from June to early September. The pressure on the record was enormous, some of it self-applied. Working with producer Michael Beinhorn, Hole were bent on putting out a masterpiece, an album that was the equal to *Live Through This*. To *Nevermind*. Then there was outside pressure. It's an unfriendly time for raw, guitar-based music, and yet Hole want this record on the radio. Geffen Records has not had a hit in some time; meanwhile, many of its talented staff have moved elsewhere. Lately the label's parent company, Universal, bought PolyGram, fueling speculation that Geffen may be folded.

And, of course, there were all the lances aimed at Love. "There have been few people in the history of rock music who have more to prove than this person with this record," said Mark Kates, an A&R executive who worked with Hole at Geffen and now is the president of Grand Royal Records. "A lot of people are against her for reasons I don't want to go into and don't need to go into and that make no sense to me at all."

Others were happy to go into why they disliked her. Jon Pareles wrote in the *New York Times* that it was "sad to see her swanning through Hollywood as if she couldn't wait to become superficial." He questioned whether a millionaire actress could have anything urgent to say to the most pit.

For serious music fans, Hole's new sound on *Celebrity Skin* is bound to stir other questions about their motivation and integrity. The band recently covered a Fleetwood Mac tune and visited a bass rehearsal. Hole were impressed by the older band's professionalism. "Whoa, now I see how it all works," Erlendson said.

Then there was Billy Corgan, the Smashing Pumpkins' leader, who is close to several members of Hole and who will inevitably get a fair amount of credit for the album if it turns out to be a success (such as Cobain was rumored to have been the creative genius behind *Live Through This*). "I hear it and it's not there, and I can take you there," Corgan had told Love after she sent him an early tape of the songs in 1997. Love overcame her irritation at his arrogance to work with him for a couple of weeks. Corgan is a master who knows his craft and knows music history, too, from ragas to Sinatra to Top 40. He urged Erlendson to bring his guitar sound up and worked with Love on phrasing and hooks. A song could be bloody and intense and meaningful, but without a hook it wouldn't get on the radio. Corgan shares music credit on five songs, and his influence can be detected in such finely turned moments as the chorus on "Malibu," in which Love's voice displays a rich suppleness over the bleeding edge of Erlendson's guitar.

But two weeks of Corgan was evidently enough. The apprenticeship was sometimes stressful, and Love didn't want to have Corgan likes to haunt, strip clubs and hip restaurants. "Billy is more of a boy boy," Auf der Maur said with affectionate mockery.

Corgan discovered Auf der Maur. It was only her sixth live gig, in a small Montreal club. "Kid, you can play," he said (and yes, she was cute, too) and it wasn't long before the two musicians had determined that they were both Pisces (Kurt Cobain's sign, as well).

When Kristen Pfaff died in June 1994, Corgan recommended Auf der Maur to Hole. Love liked that Auf der Maur didn't want to leave Montreal for fame. The girl was grounded. Erlendson called with a list of serious questions.

Do you play with pick or fingers? ("Pick, of course—fingers are for funk or jazz.") Do you sing? (Yes; her biggest musical influence was the classical choirs she was in as a girl.) What about drugs? ("I don't have any history with drugs whatsoever.") And, what's your sign?

"We're all very astrogologically aware," Auf der Maur said over lunch in New York. Pisces is at the end of the zodiac cycle, and that made her a good match for Love, she said. The thought is that later signs have been through the newcomers' experience. Cancors (like Love) tend to be "immature," Auf der Maur went on, "emotionally primitive, experimental. Whereas Pisces are more refined emotional users."

LAST SPRING, THE HIVE OF COURTNEY HATED WAS THE MISSION DISTRICT OF San Francisco, where, despite Love's lawyers' threat to sue, the Roxie Cinema was premiering the film *Kurt and Courtney*. The movie was entertaining but nauseating. The Roxie calendar of events accurately described it as exploring Love's "possible involvement in Cobain's death," and that was the most appalling thing about it, the way it licensed people to believe the worst on the basis of no real evidence. "As if, as fucking it," Love spluttered to me. The film was quite literally slander.

Outside, afterward, viewers said they felt the people in the film wouldn't be saying such horrible things about Love if there wasn't something to it.

All the stories I heard prior to the movie and prior to Nirvana's success as far as her being a violent person were sort of reaffirmed," said a 29-year-old named Boz, who said he used to own a nightclub.

"I see her as a chameleon," said a 37-year-old substance-abuse counselor named Michael Ryan. "And the Versace word probably looked like a better train ride than the one she was on. But who can blame her? She's a great showperson and a great manipulator, and I admire the drive. Even if it's like, 'I don't know who the fuck you are, lady, that's art. If it would get her out of Seattle—get me a gown and I'll make millions. Who wouldn't?' He made a face. "Well, Kurt wouldn't."

"Kurt, who I knew well, had many problems," said Gary Gersh, the recently departed Capital exec who signed Hole when he was at Geffen, offering something of a defense. "People have wanted to make her pay for Kurt's death since the day he died, and it's a complete and utter fucking waste of time. People who know her well have problems with Courtney for other reasons that have nothing to do with this."

The widespread hatred toward Love draws mostly on the belief that there is nothing really genuine behind her ambition. One of the worst moments in *Kurt and Courtney* was something Love plainly did to herself, blowing up on the Today show, saying she didn't want to talk about her drug use to Today's "demographic." It was weirdly calculating.

The ways in which Love provokes us was captured well by an Italian magazine I saw on a California newsstand. It featured an Avedon shot of Love on the cover and the headline "*Trasgressiva o Integrità?*" Basically, "Iconoclast or Hack?" Broomfield's answer was honest and deceptive. For his documentary, he adopted the role of outsider, a nobody who still has integrity, aligned with the lumpen

"THIS IS NOT MY MASTERPIECE," SCHEMEL SAID, "AND WHAT THE BAND HAS BECOME I DON'T WANT TO BE PART OF ANYMORE."

fringe. In fact, Broomfield's no job. He's a well-connected Brit, once an intimate of Princess Diana. And yes, Love used her Hollywood-enhanced power to shut down Broomfield's funding and try to intimidate him. Still, his pose seemed disingenuous and typical of Brit journalists who come here to alumn.

ON A SATURDAY MORNING IN MARCH, THE MAN AT THE FRONT DESK OF Chateau Marmont in Los Angeles called across the lobby and said Love was on the phone, and I ducked into the wooden booth. She said she was lying in bed with her daughter, watching cartoons and ruling her fashion choice at the Grammys, which had taken place in late February.

"Me and Jewel were overdressed. We were wearing designer gowns. Fuck that. Oh God, I'm not doing it anymore." I'd love to be brave enough to grow my hair brown and, like, have amput hair."

She was on a tear. She said that movies were a big part of why she had become a rock star. Ten years ago, when she was chubby and her nose was no good, she'd gotten turned down for a part in a David Rabe play in New York and had spied the casting director's clipboard, with a lot of rock stars' names, including Lydia Lunch.

"If I went away and became a rock star, could I get these parts?" Love asked. "She said, 'The world would be your oyster.'"

But music was so demanding. Love wasn't going to let happen to her what Bob Dylan said happened to Judy Garland, that she had died standing in front of a thousand clowns, still trying to give them what they wanted. That was the pathetic thing that happened to doves, Love said.

"They give up their essential femininity. It's an onanistic thing."
"Slow down, please, Courtney," I said, scribbling away on a message pad.
"I'll be over in about an hour."

I sat in the courtyard and tried to unpack her rant. But it was like so many of Love's riffs: it was performance, inspired, shimmering, and in the moment. You couldn't take it apart. In one corner of the courtyard a hummingbird rose and fell.

Three hours later I was called again and Love was sitting alone where that hummingbird had been. She wore red stockings, clunky black shoes, a tweed skirt, and a pretty green shawl that made her eyes even more alive. She started riffling on gender. She had seen a show on the Discovery Channel about differences between the males and females of animal species.

"Why do you get a male?" she cried.
"But girls are so much prettier than boys."
"Yeah, but decoratively. Decoratively! Externally!"
"What about a peacock?"
"But that's in nature. Look, I feel happier when I'm like protected by males, that's the big dirty secret of it all. I love men. Love men! Her voice went hushed. "Love them! I just sort of hate them, too. I just want to sit at the table with equal grace..."

A slim blond woman with a shopping bag walked under the colonnade on the other side, and Love broke off.

"Here comes Claire Danae back from Fred Segal [a fancy clothing store]. She's growing up to be fine, isn't she. She gave me a cross look."
"She did?"

"She's truly growing up. It looks like she's filling out. She was cast in *The Rainmaker* when she wasn't even old enough to play a bride. She was 16. Maybe in Southern states you can marry at 16."

She turned back to the subject of differences.

"Why don't we get a quest? This friend of mine was trying to calm me down. She said, 'Psyche enters the darkest part of the forest, too.' But you know, getting to be Psyche and getting neurotic and lunar all the time, I'm like, yeah, it's at the mercy of all these male figures."

She went on. "I'm talking about valor and love and romance, and all these things seem not very Buddhist. Is that a word, Buddhist? It must be if *ironics*/fucking is." (We had been arguing about whether *ironics* is a word.) Then her voice went Borscht Belt. "They'll let in anything these days."

"That's funny," I said.
"Thank you. I'm so glad you said that."
"You're smart."

"Nobody will write about it. It doesn't make good copy. Bob Dylan's allowed to be smart and dark. I'm not because I wear lipstick or something. Dorothy Parker's allowed to be smart because she doesn't get fucked, right? Her liver's pickled, so she can be smart. She paid her price up front. Dead women can be smart."

A denim-clad man in the hotel's sitting area draped himself frankly against a window.
"Is that person staring at you?"

"Yeah, he totally is. Knock it off! I don't know him. It's the Chateau. They should throw him right out. What were we saying?"

We were discussing how Love refused to be a gargoyle for a public that demanded realism. "I am not there to be their Patti Smith," she continued. "That is Polly Harvey's job. And if Polly Harvey isn't doing her job, don't blame me for it, it is not my fucking problem. I never said I was going to be their geek. My job is to get down into this world. I don't have to go make like feminine Anne Sexton music, I'm going to make music for the people. My job is like, fuck all this gender difficulty, fuck all this female experience rage shit."

"What about the fashion stuff?" I said. "You've hung out with superficial people." Now she began yelling. "Because rock is so pure? Because the people in rock don't heartlessly and vilely, like, take advantage of young boys and girls and make them fucking sign their blood away on the dotted line for a 4 percent royalty rate. I mean, sit there and rip them off divinely."

"The Versace pictures?"

"I fucking wanted to do them. They seduced me plain and simple. They sent me so many clothes, they took me places in limos. They took, like, great pictures with world-class photographers." She laughed. "And I'm, like, yeah, fuck, who gives a shit? I don't care. I feel a little funny about it, but I did it anyway. I just felt, like, this profound connection with [Versace's sister Donatella] and I love their clothes, and I love the weirdness and coolness of their clothes. I'm sorry—I'm not really sorry."

"Why should you be sorry?"
"Because it's kind of lame, but it's kind of not. I don't know. I did the Versace campaign. I did it. I did it, I did it."

DUSK SET IN, AND LOVE SUGGESTED WE CROSS THE COURTYARD TO A TABLE with a lantern over it. This table was under a bushy palm tree and right next to an open window in the hotel. Love leaned into the room. "We're going to be talking loudly," she said. "I'm just going to close this."

The woman inside got a funny look. Love sat down. I asked her about acting versus making music. "There's lots more bourgeois respectability" to acting, she said. "But Meryl Streep probably doesn't know the sublime pleasure of standing in front of 10,000 people and, like, making them do whatever you want. That's, like, the funnest thing in the world. And, like, diving into them and being torn limb from limb." And barely taking a breath, she launched into the business of it all, the numbers. "The only difference is there's no royalty system for the artist. In music there's a much healthier participation. You buy a record, I participate in it. In Hollywood, you watch *Mommie Dearest* some time, just remember, she's [presumably Faye Dunaway] is not getting a dime for that, and it fucked her up, okay? So her psychic energy is being suspended, she's getting dime zero."

"Wait a second..."
"Wait a second, yourself. Who's getting that money? White males in fucking suits. Okay? That's who's getting that money."

The woman came to the window.
"I like this window open," she said.
Love shot her a look. I was afraid there was going to be a fight. (Love's violent outbursts were legendary. She would later say her "rough streak" came from getting the crap beaten out of her in junior high school and juvenile hall.)

"Okay, you got it," she said.
We went inside and sat on a couch in the corner. Love had more tea and the waiter gave her cigarettes and she unscrewed the little jar of honey, dripped it with a spoon into her cup.

"What is so wrong with the word *manipulate*?" she said. "Huh? I manipulate this spoon to do something. You have to manipulate things."

I brought up the time I first met her and she told Gurmukh the yoga teacher that she'd just been kissing ass. As I started to talk about my feelings, Love rocked angrily on the couch. "Does that take away your authenticity?" she said. "Oh my God. Now you're being mean. Now you're being mean."

"Well, I felt..."
"Used? Exploited? What? Oh my God! I'd rather be funny and, like, say 'kissing ass' in front of somebody. I was just poking fun at the whole idea. But, in the end, all this exchange is going to be, in the end, is product. Product."

It was the heartless, overly defended part of Love, the sense that everything is a means to an end. For a moment I identified with her former lover in the *Kurt and Courtney* movie, rocker Rozz Rezabek, who says bitterly there was little that was genuinely "Yell" in Love's dealings with him.

She seemed to sense that, and tried to explain herself. "It's just drive," she said. "It

A black and white photograph of a woman with long, dark hair, wearing a dark, textured coat. She is holding a guitar and looking towards the camera. In the background, a train car is visible with the words "ARMANI EXCHANGE" painted on its side. The scene is set outdoors, possibly near a railway track. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows. The overall mood is artistic and edgy. In the bottom right corner, the "A|X" logo is prominently displayed, with "ARMANI EXCHANGE" written below it. At the very bottom, the text "Whynghed - eternal" is visible. On the left side, there is a vertical URL: "www.armaniexchange.com".

isn't machinations and it isn't shrewishness, although that's what's ascribed to it when it's a quality in females traditionally. It's just drive for your own vision to be part of the world order. And that's Darwinism. I just want to signal that I'm a worthwhile mate, and my skill at this one thing."

She got up to go and left her little black handbag on the couch.

OVER THE SUMMER, LOVE GOT EVEN MORE NEGATIVE PRESS. FROM BEING nowhere, the Broomfield movie was suddenly everywhere. So much for Love's efforts to suppress it. In London it was pulling positive reviews. "Inspired stuff," said *The Independent* on Sunday. Back at home, the press seized on the film as an occasion to do stories that tried to put Love in her place. In *The New Yorker*, the essayist Daphne Merkin focused on Love's personal transformation, everything from plastic surgery to her contract with the PR firm PMK, and said that the change was unconvincing and made her infinitely less interesting. Love later told me that all the plastic surgery she'd had was before her transformation, before the early 1990s (and, calling the issue "cheesy," said that if she needed any further work done she would do it). The movie did set off a mild pro-Courtney backlash: Lots of moviegoers expressed sympathy over the footage in the film of her belligerent father, to which Love responded that she never knew him, saying she spent a total of only two weeks of her life with him. Yet she claimed an inheritance from him: "Nerve."

Not all Hole's problems came from outside. About the time the cover art for *Celebrity Skin* was going to press, it was decided Patty Schemel had to leave the band. I was told that Schemel was using drugs and had not heeded interventions. But Schemel said this was not the case. She said that producer Michael Beinhorn had never warmed to her style and ultimately brought in a replacement, a man, to play the parts Schemel had written. Feelings of artistic betrayal made it too painful for Schemel to imagine going on stage with Hole, and the band concurred. "This is not my masterpiece, and what the band has become I don't want to be a part of any more," she said by phone from Los Angeles, now and then weeping over the end of her six years in Hole and the loss of close friendships with Love and Auf der Maur.

In spite of these setbacks, Love was in the most relaxed mood I'd experienced with her when we spoke in July. She had just returned from days of meditation in New Mexico, where she said she'd had a vision. Her acting plans were set. She was going to begin filming *Man on the Moon* for director Miles Forman (Forman had worked with Love on *The People v. Larry Flynt*). The new film is about Andy Kaufman, the comic, who died in 1984, and Love will play the girlfriend. According to Love, the deal was celebrated at a June dinner with Forman at a Brentwood restaurant during which Love's costar, Jim Carrey, rose from the table and smashed a wine bottle on the wall to herald Love's birthday.

"I'm going to enter this psychic space where I will be the soul of empathy," Love said of the role. "I'm going to play one of the others, understanding, nonjudgmental, brown-haired, '70s dirndl-curt, tight and Scholl sandals, no-makeup hippie chicks who were endlessly fascinated by weirdness but also completely 100 percent supportive."

Love was no longer the avatar of the angry young woman. And she seemed to agree with some of her fans when she said her old anger was "something in myself that I seem to have betrayed."

"How did you betray it?"

"By getting married. By being romantic. By falling in love. By wanting to have a baby. By not being hard. By being seduced by love. I walked off from my past."

"Isn't that growth you honor?"

"Sort of, but sometimes I hate myself for it. Sometimes I get really angry. I think about all the hard divas that I met that have hard hearts and didn't fail for the boys. And I'm going to be a woman. When I'm done with this, no one's going to stop me from being a woman. I'm not saying that in a *Cosmo* sense of the word: She Has It All. But you know what, you can have whatever you want. You know why? You know why? This is America! It's not England. It's fucking America! God bless if I mean it!"

That was aimed at Tina Brown, the Englishwoman who was editor of the *New Yorker* when it printed Daphne Merkin's article and had recently struck a deal with Miramax to produce movies, TV shows, and a magazine. The message of the *New Yorker* piece, Love said, was un-American: What she comes from she must return to. "Like, born a seer, die a seer," Love said. "Born a coarse-featured peasant, die a fucking... Kiss my ass! Someone told me [Brown's] coming out here to head a studio. Not on my fucking time she's not. She enters the 213 area code, I'm going to throw her right the fuck back out."

Love clearly loves controversy, even after a week of meditation. "I think you're still motivated by a need for attention," I said.

"But so what? I feel like I have a duty. I as an architect have a need to impose my worldview on the culture. I was born with that need. But I'm not emotionally or spiritually bankrupt and I never have been. And even when I was as close to being spiritually bankrupt as you can get, I had a core in me that, still ragingly and with passion and with conviction, wanted to be the person who puts my vision out."

"Was it necessary to use people here and there?" I said.

Love was put off at first, then said, "Using, yeah, Learning. Learning craft from some people, learning self-effacement from others, watching people do their art. It is Athens who rises with the stallions and when they fucking get exhausted and they fall down, she just switches and gets another one? Yeah, to win the race, to get through the gates. What did they get out of me? A lot. The men run companies. The men are multimillionaires. The one man that I loved so much and didn't feel that way about—she was finally talking about Cobain—"She was crushed, and he was crushed for, and I believe this, he was crushed for his love for me. They killed him because he loved me. That's not what the weak, enfeebled, emasculated Dionysian hero is supposed to do. He's not supposed to love me. But he did. That is a tragedy."

Her voice drained off. "But he was so sensitive... I don't want to get too into this."

She was willing to talk about her current relationship.

"I have a boyfriend. He's magnificent. I wrote some incredible songs about him. I don't think I've ever had a boyfriend quite as great as this boyfriend, an incredible noble brilliant human being who has inspired me to learn so much. But I'm not going to say who he is. Because you know why? I'm not going to serve him up for everyone to fucking ace up and emasculate. I will never ever let that happen to a man again. I'd cut my heart out before I'd let that happen."

"That's what happened before?"

"I didn't serve anybody up on purpose, but I wasn't hiding it, and I wasn't doing the lit, WASP thing of not talking about it. I got married. There it was. Big, bold, punk-rock, black-and-white, crazy-ass, fucking ride into town, like gypsies. I didn't know and I'm an idiot and I should have known."

"You mean the ways you showed yourself and others to be exposed?"

"Yeah."

It was hard to imagine an equal relationship with Love. She was forceful, loud, controlling. "One of the things about you, Courtney, in a relationship is you have such energy and, you once said, testosterone."

"Estrogen too," she said. "I'm trying to balance them.... Okay. Let me tell you something about my personal history in terms of men. They have to be butch in the end.... They can walk around in fucking dresses for all I care, so long as I get thrown around the room. It's a contest. I don't care what you do for a living. If you can throw me around the room, then you've mastered me."

LOVE'S VISION HAD COME TO HER WHILE SHE WAS MEDITATING WITH A GROUP of Sikhs, but at night she had become impatient. She had to sit through lectures about the grace of the divine mother, and she had protested. "What about the divine whore?" she asked. Why were so many religions based on the grace of the creation of life?

"What about the woman as the keeper of everybody else's sexuality? She maybe doesn't make the sons but she keeps the ones. Okay?"

As she recited these intensely personal experiences into my tape recorder, I thought this is how she annoys people. She is too needy for comfort, too raw ever to be truly embraced. She says she will never again offer up her innards for public inspection, then she does just that. She thinks this spectacle will elevate the horde. Maybe it will; and maybe it is her own destruction, too. Is any other popular figure so hugely compelling?

"So in my vision there were these gates at the end of an arc," she continued. "Like a Roman arc of triumph, and I'm on a horse, going in through the gates on a stallion, or in my case, a mare. So as I'm going through the gates I see by the side of the road this exquisite house. And I'm thinking the divine whore is the person who's never allowed into the gate. She has to live in the nicest house outside the town before the gates. You can't even see her trophies, because her trophies have been covered up by the trophies and inheritances of other people. And all she does is covet men's power. And I realized, I don't live in that house anymore." ■

Log on to SPINonline for a star-map history of Courtney Love, including features, news, soundclips, and e-mails for the girl with the most cake. Keyword: Spin on America Online.

THE ONE MAN THAT I LOVED SO MUCH... HE WAS CRUSHED FOR HIS LOVE FOR ME. THEY KILLED HIM BECAUSE HE LOVED ME.

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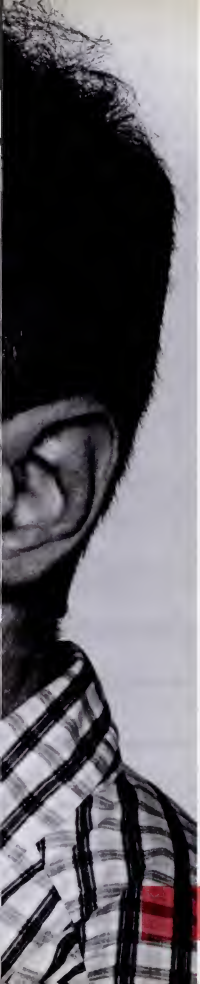




HE'S A PEOPLE PERSON

FOR FILMMAKER TODD SOLONDZ, PEDOPHILES, PHONE STALKERS, AND NEIGHBORS WHO DISMANTLE THE DOORMEN ARE JUST LIKE YOU AND ME. OF COURSE, HIS MOVIE STUDIO DIDN'T THINK SO. BY CHRIS NORRIS

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXEI HAY



Many years ago, director Todd Solondz was hard at work on his first novel. These were lonely, bewildering times for the young artist—long before the Cannes prize, the Hollywood lunches, the glare of publicity. Actually, it was before the fourth grade. His influences were the usual for an eight-year-old fabulist—Lloyd Alexander, C.S. Lewis, *Harriet the Spy*—but his *dramatis personae* were a bit less conventional. In particular, there was a character named Mr. Fuck.

"I had no idea it was some sort of inappropriate word," Solondz recalls. "There was a lot of giggling and tittering when I showed it to everyone at school. I changed it, I remember, to Colonel Fuckson, with a V."

In some ways, this perplexing childhood confrontation with "mature themes" sets the tone for Solondz's latest work. In his new film, *Happiness*, just such an encounter takes place, and it's among the most extraordinary film scenes of the year.

A father sits on a sofa with his 12-year-old son, answering questions about sex. The son's questions—phrased in the same slowward, pitch-perfect kid-speak Solondz wrote for *Welcome to the Dollhouse*—have to this point in the film elicited the gentle candor you'd expect from a loving, plugged-in parent. But as the topic turns from nocturnal emissions to the father's own sexual life—which has recently included certain acts with prepubescent boys—this candor becomes something excruciating and spectacular, almost like a special effect.

"Then what did you do?" asks the son, tears running down his face. "Did you...masturbate?"

"No," says the father, choking up. "I made love...I fucked them."

The scene puts heartrending family love smack up against the darkest recesses of human sexuality. It presents a pedophile as a fully rounded character and shows honesty as a sort of ultimate redemption. It has also proved to be just a tad controversial.

This July, shortly after winning the Cannes Film Festival's International Critics Prize, *Happiness* was dropped by its distributor, October Films, under pressure from parent companies. No cuts of scenes or material were requested. "There was apparently something that was inherently just too troubling for them that no cuts would alleviate," says Solondz.

This is an increasingly common scenario for independent films. "A lot of the companies that we really thought were mavericks, like October and Fine Line and Miramax, are seeing the encroachment of corporate culture," says Christine Vachon, coproducer of *Happiness*. "A lot of the films that these companies made their names on they wouldn't even release today."

While *Happiness* will appear in theaters this month, now being distributed by Good Machine Releasing (October returned the rights to Solondz and let him keep the money), the director has nonetheless made one of the most aggressively uncommercial films of the year. More significantly, he's made one, like *Crash*, *Kids*, and *Bestard Out of Carolina*, that's become a '90s test case of mainstream cultural tolerance.

"PEDOPHILIA PER SE IS OF LITTLE INTEREST TO ME," SAYS Solondz, somewhat reassuringly. In a Greenwich Village restaurant, the slight 38-year-old in gigantic, thick-framed glasses speaks in the charmingly whiny outer-New York accent common to Norman Lear sitcoms of the '70s. He absently smooths a drinking-straw wrapper between two fingers while his singsong discourse trips through words such as "pedophilia" and "cum shots." After a few daring glances, an older couple sitting behind him changes seats.

"The movie is not so much about any perversion, so to speak," he says. "But rather about a kind of struggling to connect...I hope when people watch this movie they won't look and say, 'Look at those freaks,' but rather see these people in some way reflective of that world we live in...people dealing with desire, isolation,

alienation just like the rest of us."

With 1995's *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, Solondz established himself as a comedic visionary of daily suffering and abuse. Following the travails of 11-year-old junior-high outcast Dawn Wiener, *Dollhouse* brought a sharp, novelistic eye to terrain rarely explored without saccharine strings or fart jokes. (Its original title was *Faggots and Retards*.) In many ways, *Happiness* takes its cues from *Dollhouse*'s most ominous line, in which Wiener's older brother describes high school: "They still call you names, just not so much to your face." *Happiness* shows what else they're not doing in front of your face.

While the film features plenty of late-'90s hot buttons—errant sperm, assault rifles, Tamagotchi pets—the film's particular brand of controversy is quite unlike the punkish confrontationalism of *Kids* or the mannered kinship of *Crash*. Instead, *Happiness*'s most troubling quality is its unpretentious frankness, its sensationalistic topics treated calmly. "There's nothing that I deal with on-screen that isn't exposed on a daily basis in the media," says Solondz. "But usually [in the media] there's a very moralistic sort of stance, like 'Rape is bad,' as if there were an argument."

Happiness skillfully merges an array of stories about housewives, cab drivers, rapist doormen, and obscene phone callers, and shows how they function day-to-day. "I want everyone to see that there are layers to our lives that we may not all want to acknowledge," Solondz says. But *Happiness*, when it's not disturbing or heartbreaking, is also uproariously funny. The film sets love scenes against Air Supply songs, murder fantasies to Pledge-commercial Muzak. It shows the fumbly, curses, and jism of the lonely and the horny. It's never clear whether we're supposed to laugh, cry, or picket the theater. "I suppose the moorings of the film are somewhat elusive," Solondz says. "But they're very present nevertheless. It's not a paint-by-numbers kind of experience for the audience."

In this unsettling endeavor, Solondz is in some ways part of a new cinematic vanguard. His peers include writer/directors such as Neil (Your Friends & Neighbors) LaBute, Todd (Safe) Haynes, and even the latter-day Woody Allen, whose *Deconstructing Harry* almost gives *Happiness* a run for its money in lubriciousness. All of these writer/directors have recently made uncommonly honest examinations of current social realities, addressing contemporary relationships with a directness that feels shocking, and, at times, even cruel.

But Solondz denies any meanness. "I feel very connected to my characters," he says. "With the suburbs, I didn't set out to show that, oh, everything on the surface is really nice, and underneath there are these demons lurking. The people are real to me, and I'm very moved by them. But often what they're going through is also hilarious. What moves me is often what I find very funny, and vice versa."

This refined sense of the tragicomic runs throughout Solondz's movies, which the director characterizes as "depressing sorts of comedies." His recent inspirations include photographer Larry Sultan, whose book of photo essays about his own family Solondz calls "very sad and very funny." "There are in fact a lot of movies that make me laugh," he says, "but rarely comedies." In the end, the word "comedy" itself seems a loaded term in Solondz's universe.

Even so, Solondz once tried his hand at stand-up. He spent a week remembering anecdotes, writing up bits, developing a routine. "The only thing missing," he says, "was confidence." The afternoon of his debut, his mother called.

"I had the act all ready. I just needed that last push to go onstage," he says. "So I said, 'Mom, I think I'm gonna be a stand-up comic.' And she said to me [in a wan, Edith Bunker voice], 'Well...go ahead. But you know you're not very funny.'"

Find out what Todd Solondz's cast really thought of him. Go to *SpinOnline* at keyword: Spin on AOL for interviews with the stars of *Happiness*.

Happy happy hardcore: "There's nothing that I deal with on-screen," says Solondz, "that isn't exposed on a daily basis in the media."



A TALE OF TWO CITIES

TECHNO PIONEER JUAN ATKINS AND HIS DISCIPLES ONCE RULED DETROIT, THEN SPLIT FOR GREENER PASTURES. IN THEIR WAKE CAME 'BURBAN RAVERS AND X-RATED BOOTY. MIKE RUBIN REPORTS ON THE BATTLE FOR TECHNO CITY

photographs by LIZ JOHNSON-ARTUR

Seven Mile and Greenfield may look like a lot of things, but the future isn't one of them. The busy intersection in northwest Detroit lies just south of 8 Mile Road, the infamous boundary between the largest U.S. city with a majority African-American population and its prosperous and predominantly white suburbs, but it might as well be a planet away. On a sunny Saturday afternoon in early June, Nation of Islam members stand in traffic hawking copies of the *Final Call*. Two kids sell katydids for \$5 from a makeshift stand. Telephone poles act as crude town criers, with lettered handbills announcing 40 YEARS OF MOTOWN: THE REUNION AND NEED CASH? REFERENCE! A weathered billboard threatening ARMAGEDDON: JULY 1ST most likely heralds an overhyped action flick, but given Detroit's tragic history anything is possible.

It's a vista that hardly seems to fit the description "Techno City," the name Juan Atkins hung on Detroit almost 15 years ago, yet this is the neighborhood where Atkins

grew up, and where the futuristic electronic music began. It was near this spot that Buy-Rite Records stood, the first local store to offer 12-inch dance singles by area producers and musicians. Many of those same artists—Atkins, Derrick May, Kevin Saunderson, Carl Craig, to name a few—are now superstar DJs abroad, their international stature cemented years ago, but in their own community they're practically invisible. Atkins hopes to rectify that, and thus the "Godfather of Techno" has chosen this storied corner as the location for his own record store.

Named after the world's first techno label, which Atkins launched in 1985, the Metroplex Shop is celebrating its grand opening today. The festivities should be the crowning moment of the 35-year-old Atkins's career, but things don't go exactly as planned. Hard-to-find singles by Atkins recorded under the name Model 500 hang on the wall, but only the white customers are leaping through the distant techno racks; the store's few black shoppers are crowded around a display case of rap cassettes. Meanwhile, the

shop's speakers shake to an altogether different beat. "There's some ho's in this house / If you see 'em point 'em out!" squeals a high-pitched rapper over preposterously fast BPMs. It's a cut mixed by DJ Assault, the current kingpin of Detroit booty music, the ghetto take on techno that currently has a vice grip on the local radio airwaves. Even in Atkins's own store, techno is no longer top atomic dog.

Such is the dilemma faced by Atkins and his accomplices. In the city where the assembly line was made a staple of modern life, techno's Henry Ford and his accomplices welded together Motor City funk, European avant-garde composition, and Japanese gadgetry to form a whole new chassis, but found their invention unappreciated in the American marketplace. Like jazz musicians from Ben Webster to Dexter Gordon in the 1960s, Atkins, May, and Saunderson embarked for Europe in the late '80s to find their fame and fortune. These days, due largely to their accomplishments, Detroit is indeed known as "Techno City" to the dance world, a place

We built this city: Godfathers of Techno Juan Atkins, opposite, and Kevin Saunderson, this page, helped stake Detroit's claim as "Techno City."





Frang in Detroit: "I thought this from the suburbs got their / rave on; opposite, interviewer/impressionist Carl Craig."



referred to in hushed, reverential tones. But Atkins and friends have suffered a double whammy: Not only have they failed to gain any real American success, they have lost their original black base in the process. "Our audience back home now is primarily white kids," May tells me later. "We could go out and promote in the black community, give out flyers, but they won't come, 'cause they'll say, 'Ah, that music is weird. It ain't what's happening.'"

"In the U.S.," Atkins says of the techno landscape, "a black kid can come up with something profound in his basement, and won't get noticed in his own backyard. But kids in the U.K. can discover it." In front of the store, some passersby have staged an impromptu rap concert, grabbing a mic and freestyling at shell-rattling volume. A couple of shoppers glance at the singles on the wall, shrug, then leave. "Because of its racial politics," says Atkins, somewhat beleagueredly, "America is falling behind the rest of the world."

THE TUG-OF-WAR AT THE HEART OF TECHNO MIRRORS the disension in the city it hails from. Detroit is still reeling from the repercussions of July 23, 1967, when a police raid on a black after-hours drinking spot touched off six days of violence, the worst U.S. civil disorder of the 20th century until L.A. in 1992. "While flight" to the suburbs was already well under way, but the riot put serious horsepower behind the city's abandonment. In the first 20 years after the riot, Detroit lost one third of its population; a city built for two million people has today dwindled to less than half that. In one generation, Detroit went from 70 percent white to almost 80 percent black. Further devastated by a declining auto industry and skyrocketing unemployment, more than half of the city's manufacturing, retail, and wholesale base had disappeared by 1987.

The fancy term for this is "deindustrialization," but "ghost town" is more apt. Far from the lawlessness that the national media have portrayed, the prevailing feeling in Detroit is an eerie emptiness. Prewar skyscrapers in

the heart of downtown stand forlorn and abandoned, streets dotted with ramshackle shanties amid untended scrub look more like backcountry roads in the Mississippi Delta than arteries in a major urban core.

Yet the city's postapocalyptic mystique is crucial to the mythology of Detroit techno. The contradictions in imagining a technologically advanced future while both the past and present sit in shambles around you are rich indeed, as are those of a sophisticated art music hailing from such a stubbornly close-minded, blue-collar town. "To the rest of the world, Detroit is like a prune pit," says Craig. "It's an underdog, but you can do what you've gotta do without people bothering you."

Techno's roots in Detroit date back to a black FM DJ named Charles Johnson—better known by his on-air name, the Electrifying Mojo. From 1977 into the mid-'80s, Mojo punctuated a philosophy he calls "counterclockwiseology": ignoring the strict racial formatting that afflicted the local airwaves. "When I first got to Detroit, it



was like apartheid on the dial," Mojo recalls, "separatist radio." A typical evening's session of Mojo's genre-defying *Midnight Funk Association* ranged from Parliament's "Flesh Light" to Visage's "Frequency 7," plus anything and everything by Prince. Most important, when the German electronic group Kraftwerk's *Computer World* came out in 1981, Mojo played virtually the entire album every night, making a lasting impact on impressionable young listeners like Juan Atkins.

When Atkins was in high school, his family moved from the city to Belleville, a small rural town 30 miles southwest of Detroit. Because there were so few black families in Belleville, Atkins struck up friendships with two pals of his younger brother: Derrick May, who had also just moved from Detroit, and Kevin Saunderson, who had recently relocated from Brooklyn. New York. Atkins turned his pale on to Mojo's radio show, and the trio began trading mix tapes, while Atkins, May, and May's friend Eddie "Flashin'" Fowles began spinning

at parties under the name Deep Space Sound.

At college, Atkins met Vietnam vet Rick Davis, and the duo formed a group called Cybotron, releasing a series of singles and an LP, replete with robotic vocals and plinky synth beats, before Atkins struck out on his own. He chose the name Model 500 as a way of "repudiating ethnic designations," cloaking his persona behind a machine-like veil. For his debut as Model 500, Atkins formed a new label, Metroplex, and unleashed the 12-inch single "No UFO's," a tale of extraterrestrial encounters with a self-empowerment subtext. Like a black version of punk rock, techno musicians around Detroit quickly launched their own labels—among them May's Transmat and Saunderson's KMS—and started releasing records, many of them produced by Atkins. Along with no-budget blank record sleeves, the artists camouflaged themselves behind a dizzying variety of alter egos, particularly Saunderson, who holds the unofficial record for aliases: He's recorded as Kream, Reese, Reese & Santonio, Reese Project, Key-

notes, Tronik House, Inner City, Inter City, and his current persona, E-Dancer. The multiple monikers were "to help Detroit seem bigger," says Saunderson, to make it appear "that there was more going on," but this elimination of any telltale emblems of African-American identity would later haunt the Detroiters in their search for a black audience. While hip-hop was rising to prominence as the *vérité* narrative of urban America, producing outsize personalities and memorable rhymes, Atkins and friends were dispensing with vocals altogether, their sci-fi soundscapes serving as cerebral tickets out of the inner city, not so much escapist as transcendent. "I've always had this addiction to anything futuristic," Atkins says. "Maybe I think everything is going to be better."

In 1988, Atkins's faith was rewarded when Virgin U.K. released the compilation *Techno! The New Dance Sound of Detroit*, and the term that Atkins lifted from Alvin Toffler's *The Third Wave* was propelled into hipster vernacular. Soon the poppier, house/techno blend of

"THIS IS OUR HOMETOWN," SAYS CRAIG,
"AND FOR US TO BE ALIENATED LIKE THIS ISN'T RIGHT."

"Good Life" and "Big Fun" by Saunderson's Inner City became enormous hits in Europe, and the locua of Detroit techno shifted overseas. "It wasn't that we went out to market records to Europe," says Atkins. "They picked up on something that America wasn't interested in." Thousands of E-fueled ravers greeted the Detroiters when they came to perform in England in '88 and '89, and the Continent soon became Motown's home away from home. "The world called," says May, "and we answered."

These days the Motor City sports almost a dozen top-shelf DJs who slip in and out of Detroit Metro Airport unnoticed each weekend, bound for five-star hotels in Europe and Japan, armed only with their metal box of records and a change of clothes. Pocketing \$2,000 to \$5,000 a night, a hard-working DJ can make, as Craig points out, "hundreds of thousands of dollars" a year. In lieu of extended touring, the DJs jet back and forth across the Atlantic every couple of days, fitting in and out of some of the world's most scenic cities the way most folks make a run to the video store. Saunderson, for example, spends each Monday through Thursday with his wife and two sons, dutiful enough a dad to make sure he's home when the kids return from school, then heads to Europe for Friday through Sunday. It gives a whole new meaning to the idea of commuting to work.

"Whenever you get Derrick or any of these people together for more than an hour," says fellow mobile DJ Richie Hawtin, "the conversation inevitably will come back down to who's got the most frequent-flyer points."

In the kitchen of Derrick May's stylish pad above the offices of his Transmat label, four clocks tell the time in London, Tokyo, New York, and Detroit, a constant reminder of where his bread is buttered. From 1986 to 1992, recording under the pseudonyms Mayday and Rhythm is Rhythm, May turned out some of the best singles that Detroit ever produced—"Nude Photo," "Strings of Life," "It Is What It Is"—and then abruptly stopped making music in favor of a jet-set DJ lifestyle that led the dance-music press to dub him the "techno playboy." "Derrick is a serious legend, like Sam Malone," says his good friend Craig. "But these days nobody in the black community knows who Derrick May is."

"We may have left here too soon," admits May, 35, assessing the creative jet lag Detroit's scene suffered in the early '90s. "We became so attached to Europe that

we left our boundaries and forgot our homesakes. We sold ourselves short—not out, but short."

WINDSOR, ONTARIO, FIVE MINUTES DUE SOUTH OF Detroit—yes, south—may be the only place from which Detroit looks like a bustling metropolis. "This is one of the best locations to get an overall picture of Detroit," says Hawtin, a.k.a. Plastikman, as he sits in the living room of his home, a former firehouse nicknamed "the Building." Since he colanched the Plus 8 label in 1990, the area's premier minimalist has become the most controversial character in the evolution of Detroit techno, so much so that there are those who feel that Hawtin shouldn't be considered part of Detroit techno at all.

Hawtin earned his devil status by almost singlehandedly bringing white, suburban rave culture to Detroit. For nearly six years he's taken advantage of Detroit's surplus of vacant warehouse and factory space and thrown what are widely acknowledged to be the city's best parties in some of its worst neighborhoods. While the originators were blitzing Europe, Hawtin stepped into the vacuum and reenergized the scene, and in the process reshaped its racial makeup. "He created the suburban culture," says DJ/composer Stacey Pullen, who records as Silent Phase and Cosmic Messenger. "Kids came out to his parties like it was a big playground."

Hawtin's arrival was accompanied by some strong feelings of resentment. A member of the black electro outfit Drexcia once hissed that Hawtin belonged to the "Caucasian persuasion," and while much of the aniping has subsided, Detroit may be the only place where you'll still hear rumblings of the sentiment that "white people shouldn't play techno." When white artist Brendan M. Gillen released his first electro record as Ectomorph, one black techno label owner told him that he should "stick to what white people do." More recently, the liner notes of Moodymann's *Silent Introduction* album included the inscription, TO ALL YOU WHITE SUBURBAN JOES, SAMPLING BLACK MUSIC ALL THE TIME, TRY SOME ROCK'N' ROLL. FOR A CHANGE, YOU'RE MAKING BLACK MUSIC SOUND SILLY, WEAK, AND TIRED.

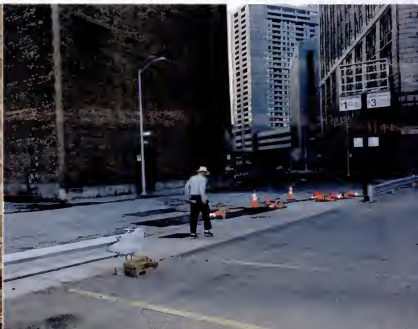
While scores of ravers followed Hawtin into the city in a reversal of white flight, "Mad" Mike Banks and his Underground Resistance label tried to steel the course of Detroit techno's original black identity. Banks, who blends the out-poken militancy of Chuck D with the D.I.Y. purism of Ian

MacKaye, is the inspirational force behind Detroit's unique strain of black nationalist techno, which ranges from the overtly political content of Banks's own group, Underground Resistance—one single is inscribed, MESSAGE TO ALL MURDERERS IN THE DETROIT POLICE FORCE: "WE'LL SEE YOU IN HELL!"—to the sci-fi scenarios of Drexcia, who propose that pregnant African women thrown overboard during the Middle Passage might not have drowned but instead given birth to a race of water-breathing Afronauts who will one day resurface to deliver Whity a beatdown.

Given Detroit's status as a bastion of black consciousness, it's hard to imagine an unlikely bunch of heroes than Aryan automatons Kraftwerk. By choosing Detroit as one of five cities on their recent U.S. tour, Kraftwerk acknowledged the debt they owed the Motor City, and vice versa—their concert at the State Theater was practically a family reunion, with all the distant cousins present in the crowd were Atkins, May, Fowlkes, Gillen, Gerald Donald (Drexcia/Doppleffekt), bass/booty jock DJ Godfather, Dan Bell (Cyberonik/DBX), Keith Tucker (Aux 88/Optic Nerve), and Anthony "Shake" Shakir. For Detroit techno, it was basically the landing of the Mothership.

When Kraftwerk finally stepped on stage, they were greeted with the enthusiasm of a Nuremberg rally. As Ralf Hütter recited, "Uno, dos," from "Numbers"—a Mojo staple—the audience thundered back, "Tres, quatro" as if the Teutons were Detroit's own. The lovefest continued afterward at an impromptu reception for the group at a new techno club called Motown, the first of its kind in Detroit in nearly a decade. Hundreds of fans packed a tiny back room to press flesh and compare gear, and despite their limited conversational abilities, Kraftwerk's Hütter and Florian Schneider mingled with their scoties until the wee hours. As the pair finally began to offer *auf Wiedersehen* to the faithful, "Shake" Shakir spoke up for all of Motown's electronic community. "I'm a musician from Detroit," he said, extending his hand to Hütter. "And I'd just like to say thank you for giving me a career."

"MY CONCEPT OF RUNNING A LABEL IS TO DO IT better than anybody else has done it around here," says Carl Craig, leaning back on a couch at the downtown offices of his record company, Planet E, a binder of sales reports on his lap and a Black Power fist Afro pick sticking out from the back of his head. The 29-year-old



honcho behind Detroit's most innovative label, Craig is the bridge between the originators and the various waves that followed, developing from the "boy genius" of techno who made his first recording in 1989 under the tutelage of Derrick May into the most consistently inventive Detroit artist of the past decade.

Since launching the company in 1991, Craig has expanded the scope of his label to include not only his own work (under pseudonyms like Paperclip People and Innerzone Orchestra), but also that of less celebrated artists, like the enigmatic Moodymann. He's also initiated the practice of compiling CD retrospectives of out-of-print material, including Kevin Saunderson's essential late-'80s underground singles and Craig's own early work as Psyche and BFC. "They do it with blues records," points out Craig, "how come we can't do it with our music? Whatever we don't sell I'm going to donate to libraries around the country and see if we can get it in their archives. Why not? You have to know your history to pave your future."

Craig, who's as close as techno comes to having a prodigy, first heard Mojo's show while in first grade, and as a teenager discovered the scene developing at the now-legendary after-hours club The Music Institute, where May was house DJ. "It blew my mind," says Craig of the short-lived venue. "I found where I wanted to be, what I wanted to do, who I wanted to become. It was like coming out of the closet."

But young black audiences today aren't having electronic epiphanies like Craig's. "Kids aren't hip-hop because it says something to them," says Craig. "It's street. Techno goes somewhere else. It relies on your intelligence. There are no words, no lyrical content. Back then, we were like, here it is, it's African rhythms mixed with European melodies, let's see what you can do with it. And they were like, fuck you. So we went to Europe."

Craig is now taking active steps locally in hopes that techno might become the soundtrack to all tomorrow's parties. He's finalizing plans to open a club next year with May, Saunderson, and fellow DJ Kenny Larkin, as well as investing in distributing free techno tapes to kids, aiming to get them hooked early on the music's instrumental pleasures. "Nobody knows our music because they can't hear it," says Craig. "We need to take the initiative and promote ourselves." Craig pushes to look out

the window at the city below. "This is our hometown," he says, "and for us to be alienated like this isn't right."

IT'S UNBEARABLY HOT INSIDE THE WALTER PALUCH Post 12 of the Polish League of American Veterans Ladies Auxiliary, but the oppressive temperature doesn't faze the 200 or so black men and women who are gathered here to "cabaret," a local tradition of staging parties at union halls and fraternal lodges. Tonight's affair is organized by employees of Chrysler, the postal service, and the Farmer Jack supermarket chain, and on the dance floor young couples socialize in their festive finery. A DJ goes through the motions on an old-school set of *Parliament* and *Comeo* standards, before melting them with a slow dance.

By 2 A.M., the dance floor is empty, the crowd listless. Folks are gathering their things and heading for the door when the house MC barks, "It's time to get this party cranked up!" and DJ D'Jital takes over the decks. Spastic, high-velocity beats start flying, a whiny voice cries, "Bounce that ass, bounce that ass!" and the dance floor explodes in a frenzy of flailing arms and legs called the "jit." "Ladies," the MC shouts, "if you've got a big ol' booty, turn it around and back it up!"

This is the world of booty music, the newest "new dance sound of Detroit," as well as one of the oldest. Alternately called "Detroit bass," "ghetto bass," "techno bass," "ghetto tech," or just lumped in with electro (the techno/hip-hop/funk fusion from which it's derived), booty has been around in one form or another since the early '80s. Harder and faster than similarly salty Miami bass, it features call-and-response chants and potty-mouthed lyrics sung in obnoxious, high-pitched voices, like Alvin and the Chipmunks as Long Beach Crips. Unlike techno, booty's topical preoccupations are easy to divine: In the words of DJ Assault's "Ass N Titties," "Ass / Titties / Ass 'n' titties / Ass ass titties titties / Ass 'n' titties." It's strictly "Shitup, there it is."

Despite Detroit techno's international lustre, booty owns the hearts, minds, and asses of the Motor City. While neither techno nor local hip-hop ever really blew up—Detroit has produced zero rappers of note—the combination of the two has become a formidable hybrid. Booty blasts out of car stereos everywhere, and receives the radio airplay techno never could achieve. Local sales are booming, with

entrepreneurs testing their records at strip clubs to see if the tracks have shake appeal. According to Mike Himes, owner of RecordTime, the area's biggest dance-music store, booty sells "five-to-one over anything else." It's total youth, it's what jungle is doing in England. It's easy to mix, you can move to it—it's got everything the kids want." Not surprisingly, there's considerable disdain from techno's elder statesmen. "It's the same old shit, just repackaged," sniffs Craig. "The best electro records were made in the early '80s. Isn't it time to move forward?"

Ultimately, though, Detroit techno's low U.S. profile has much more to do with booty to blame. Atkins and his contemporaries have been stymied by a variety of factors out of their control, including radio's conservatism, lack of record company support, and the city's isolation from the music industry (especially after Motown Records left for Los Angeles in 1972). But some culpability can also be laid squarely at the feet of the creators themselves: for issuing limited-edition, vinyl-only singles under a staggering variety of aliases, for insisting on an abstract and often radical musical vision, and for not minding the store back home.

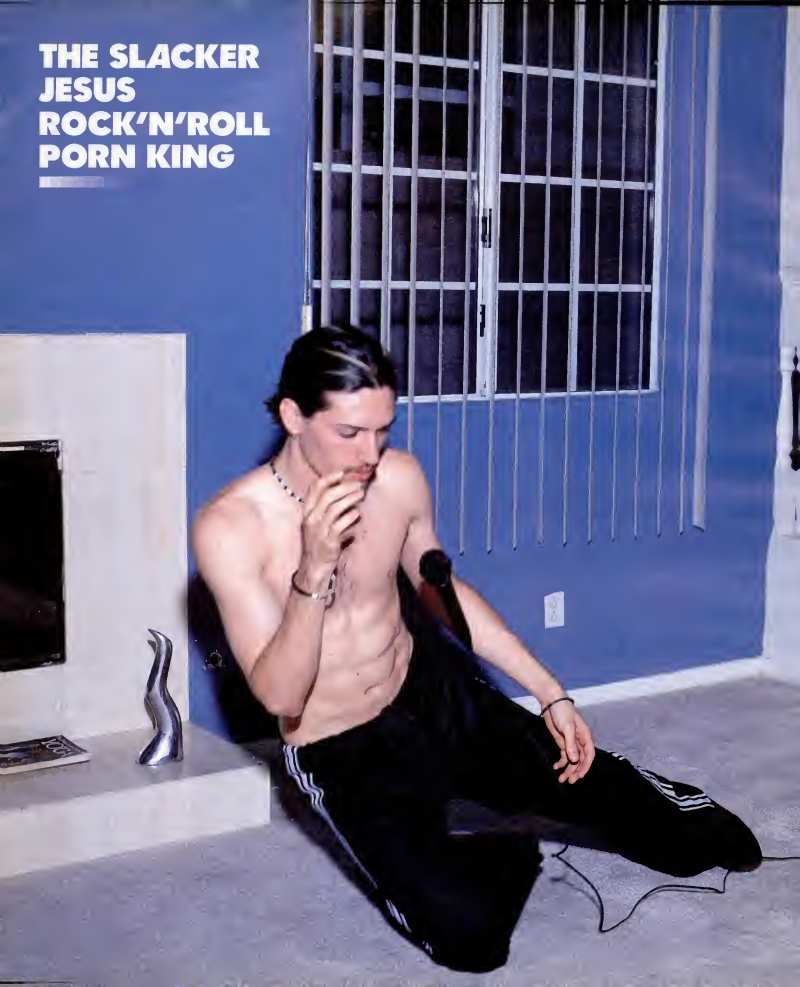
Despite all of the Motor City's marketplace pitfalls, the mood is one of optimism here at Atkins's Metroplex shop. Though the store may move more Master P tapes than Model 500 vinyl, Atkins is finally establishing a home base for the movement he helped launch. Even more encouraging, after a 15-year absence from U.S. record stores, Atkins may have three albums out this fall: A DJ mix record on TVT, a project under the name Infront, and Model 500's new *Mind and Body*. His colleagues are almost as busy: Saunderson's new *E-Dancer* album, *Heavenly*, is as funky as ever, while Craig continues derailing the transpoters with his new *Innerzone Orchestra* album, *Programmed*, an exciting departure into jazz. While Detroit's old guard enjoys renewed vitality, dozens of younger DJs are vying to join the electronic elite, and the local club scene has enjoyed a renaissance with the opening of Motor and an inspired new after-hours nightclub called Better Days.

"I've never given up on my home turf," insists Atkins, looking out his store window at the passing cars on 7 Mile Road. "There's a verse in the Bible that says all the tools that you need are in your own backyard, that you should never have to go to distant lands to reap your success. I do believe that." ■



On the edge of forever: from left, the controversial Bitchie Heatley; despite downtown Detroit, gettin' down at Better Days.

**THE SLACKER
JESUS
ROCK'N'ROLL
PORN KING**



**HE SINGS IN A BAND.
HE'S GOT A VIDEO CAMERA.
HE IS FRIENDLY WITH
ROCK STARS. HE'S FRIENDLIER
WITH PORN STARS.
MEET MATT ZANE,
PORN'S 23-YEAR-OLD
GROUPE-EXPLOITATION
AUTEUR. BY G. BEATO
PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS PETRANIS**



In a tiny rehearsal studio in North Hollywood, porn director Matt Zane is staging the final scene of his latest video. At age 23, the brash, diminutive Zane, whose wispy goatee and beatific gaze lend him the appearance of a slacker Jesus, is already a seasoned pornographer. In the past two years he's completed more than 60 videos—including 29-woman orgies, keg party bondage exhibitions, interracial sex competitions, one-man-nine-women gang-bangs, and pretty much every other manner of carnal hydraulics one could possibly imagine. Tonight, however, he's staging his own ultimate fantasy.

On the other side of a closed door, three women in tight mini-dresses, buzzed on pot and Asti Spumante, await their cue. Inside the cramped, airless studio, Zane points his video camera at a tattooed guy in a black tank top sitting behind a drum set. The drummer and three others, members of Zane's band, Society 1, start playing their brand of riff-heavy, electronica-infused metal. Zane videotapes them for a minute, and then the women knock on the door and enter. Feigning surprise at the sudden appearance of these high-heeled muses, the band falls into silence. "We're a gift from your record company," Kristen, Zane's real-life, porn-star girlfriend, says. "You just got signed!"

After this happy announcement, the women straddle an amp that has been turned on its side, and begin to kiss and cress one another as Society 1's grinning, baby-faced bassist makes the amp throb with noise. It's the quintessential Matt Zane moment: a school's-out-forever daydream, where glistening flesh meets goes-to-11 rock.

TWO YEARS AGO, WHEN VETERAN PORN PRODUCER Chuck Zane found himself in need of a new director, he turned to his son Matt, a New Agey aficionado of Carlos Cestanedo, martial arts, and yoga-derived body cleansing practices such as ten-day fasts and snorting salt water. "I wasn't very happy," says Matt, who at the time was working as a massage therapist, pounding the backs of Beverly Hills millionaires. "I kept thinking, 'Is this what you do in life?' My dad could see me getting upset. I'd go over to his

Going down: Matt Zane, who, when not making porn tapes with rock stars, wants to be a rock star, perfects his stage moves at his Los Angeles home.

Zane Entertainment's no-frills, utilitarian workspace reflects the sort of videos the company is known for: low-budget, wham-bam, wham-bam-some-more videos targeted at the hard-core raincoat crowd. Chuck Zane's



"You ever see that *Doors* movie?" asks Zane, not waiting for an answer. "I reenacted the *Doors* scene in the desert, but instead of them leaving when they really start to trip, they start to trip more and then they gang-bang girls!"

Though Zane was raised in the world of porn (before directing, he worked for his father as a tape duplicator, spending 10-hour days watching seven monitors play seven porn tapes simultaneously), he's played in bands since he was 13. When he started making movies, it seemed only natural to him to blend porn with rock. "Everybody's always trying to keep rock 'n' roll and sex separate, and it doesn't make any sense to me," he says. "Sex has always been a part of rock 'n' roll, so why deny it?"

IN THE '90S, PORN HAS SLEPT AROUND A BIT. IT'S BEEN the bored traveler's cathode hotelmate, academe's back-boy boyfriend, feminism's increasingly public mistress. But it's also become the ever-steedy date of a certain segment of youth culture: the skaters, surfers, and snowboarders who've fueled the ascent of hundreds of street-wear manufacturers and dozens of post-metal bands like Korn and Limp Bizkit. Inside the ever-mutating confines

"A lot of people in their 20s want to watch porn, but they think that what's out there is really boring or cheesy. So I'm changing everything to try and make a new form of porn for them," says Zane. "I make the dance shows, I make the rock tapes, man! I make the tapes about the bands, I make the action sequences, man! I give you the electronic music, I give you the good shit, you know? I am for the youth, man! By the youth, for the youth!"

"The one I'm doing right now, *Backstage Sluts II*," says Zane, poised upon his skateboard, voice rising with anticipation. "is going to be even better"

The adult-video actress, the porn director, the other adult-video actress, and the chauffeur: a not atypical night at Zane's. Zane is holding a megaphone, which normally is used to give direction to the actors.

A FEW YEARS AGO, JEF HICKEY, A LONGTIME ROADIE and occasional freelance contributor to publications like *Hustler Erotic Video Guide*, decided he wanted a job at a new rock'n'roll porn magazine called *New Raw*. "I was touring with Type O Negative at the time," Hickey says. "And I sent *New Raw* a letter saying I wanted to work for them. Then I sent them a piece of my hotel room every day of the tour, for 60 days—so that when I got to L.A., I'd have a place to stay. I sent them a part of the sink, I sent them a doorknob, I sent them a curtain. And that's what got me the job."

Eventually, Hickey landed at Zane Entertainment, where he's become one of Zane's most valuable assets. "After touring with so many different rock bands for the past 14 years, I know everybody," he says. "And when they find out what I'm doing, they're all into it."

Zane calls his *Backstage Sluts* videos "cockumentaries." In essence, it's an extension of a porn genre known as "gonzo," which is a lot like *The Real World* with on-screen blowjobs. But while the gonzo approach turns the various facets that tend to sabotage narrative-oriented porn (bad lighting, shaky camera work, less-than-classically trained actors) into assets that actually make the finished product seem more "authentic," watching porn performers improvise during nonsexual scenes is usually about as compelling as watching your aunt's home movies. *Backstage Sluts*—like the wildly popular, private-turned-public exploits of Tommy Lee, Vince Neil, and Bret Michaels—effectively solves this problem by introducing the celebrity lust of rock stars.

For Zane, finding willing interview subjects hasn't been difficult. While *Backstage Sluts I* was fleshed out with interviews with members from a somewhat random mix of not-quite-ready-for-MTV acts such as The Alkaholiks, Brutal Truth, and Sick of It All, the credit list for the recently released *Backstage Sluts II* reads like the lineup from a would-be Lollapalooza. Sugar Ray's Mark McGrath, Limp Bizkit's Fred Durst and Wes Borland, Clint from Sevendust, and members of a half-dozen other bands all happily discuss their backstage exploits. Not least singer Lynn Strait goes a giant step further, engaging in a threesome with his girlfriend and a porn star named Tangerine. The inspiration for all this, says Zane and Hickey, comes from life on the road. "Every crew has their resident pervert," says Hickey, who filled that role with Type O Negative, Danzig, and a host of other bands. "And everyone's got camcorders, and they document everything."

In other words, when Zane and Hickey show up backstage with video cameras and porn stars, it's often just an extension of what's already going on in the unashamedly male-dominated metal and hardcore rap scenes. And perhaps because they're just a couple of guys, rather than some big official-looking TV crew, they end up getting the sort of candid footage managers and publicists often later regret. In *Backstage Sluts I*, for example, as Zane uses the Sexsane Clown Posse's tour bus to stage a hardcore sex scene that starts with a roadie thrusting lunch meat at a naked porn star, Violent J and Shaggy 2 Dope are so taken with the spectacle of the bologna-covered

woman that they jump into the scene and toss off a few slices themselves.

Zane rationalizes such boorish behavior with the standard keepin'-it-real disclaimer. "Any real groupie who watches *Backstage Sluts* would say, 'Wow, those roadies are really being nice to those girls,'" says Zane. Of course, even if true, that doesn't change the fact that, like Marilyn Manson's autobiography or Led Zeppelin's *Hammer of the Gods*, *Backstage Sluts* rather blatantly suggests that the role of women in rock should be limited to convenient backstage sex toys. Or that *Backstage Sluts I* features only one woman who wasn't a porn star. *Backstage Sluts II* is slightly more equitable on that count. It features interviews with Tainie B. from Tura Satana (who declines to talk about her sex life) and Ruyter Suys and Corey Parks from Nashville Pussy. Parks, a six-foot-plus fire-breathing bassist, trumps Durst, McGrath, and all the other big-swinging dicks in *Backstage Sluts II* with her tale of a psychotic French-Canadian groupie and the post-coital fistfight she administered to her.

"If there're women who want to be on tape and tell their stories, more power to them," says Zane. "I don't want to just exploit women, I want to exploit men, too. You gotta understand, a *Backstage Sluts* is a backstage shot. I'd love it if Courtney Love called me up and said, 'Hey man, I've got a great story for you. I'd actually like to be in the movie and make guys lick my feet while I spank them with a flogger.' I'd go, 'Courtney, let's do it!'"

TONIGHT, ONSTAGE AT A WEST HOLLYWOOD NIGHT-club called the Coconut Teaser, Zane and his band are performing. Between songs, his girlfriend Kristen and two other women move to the front of the stage and toss dozens of porn videos, T-shirts, and copies of the band's demo tape to the crowd of leather-clad metal dudes and friends-of-the-band porn stars. After the show, as his bandmates pack up their gear, Zane steps to the edge of the stage and places his hand on Kristen's shoulder. "This is my girlfriend," he announces, his voice filled with self-promotional bluster. "But even though she's my girlfriend, that doesn't mean we don't fuck other girls. So if you want us to fuck you, meet us back at the bathroom."

After this improbable invitation to a roomful of strangers, he issues an even more improbable one: "We're having a party at my house after the show. There's gonna be porn stars, all the booze you can drink, and it's gonna go on all night!" An hour later, 50 or 60 clubgoers have taken Zane up on his invitation. In the living room of his three-bedroom ranch house, Orgy's bass player is talking about his band's upcoming album and tour. In the kitchen, two porn stars who haven't seen each other in a while engage in a friendly, good-to-see-you-again dry hump. A stocky gangsta in a Kangol hat does out hits of Ecstasy to anyone who wants one; spandex-clad club kids mix with metal dude and Goths and hopeful porn-starfuckers.

"I take people from A to Z, to show them all aspects of everything I do," says Zane, explaining the rationale behind gatherings like this one. "In all honesty, I truly believe I live like 95 percent of the male society wants to

live." This, he believes, is his most valuable asset. In the same way that Hugh Hefner sold a phantom vision of urbane '50s-era bachelorhood to middle-class suburban husbands, Zane's selling a similarly idealized vision of late-'90s sex-drugs-and-rock'n'roll to middle-class, suburban 20-year-olds.

And like Hef, Zane is always coming up with brand extensions. He recently unveiled a record label, Inzane Records. Inzane has signed two bands, Empty Grave ("Nine Inch Nails meets U2 meets Marilyn Manson") and December ("a total balls-out, rip-your-head-off band, the angriest band in the world"), and plans to release six to 12 albums in 1999. Likewise, he just finished filming *Sexual Society*, a "home movie" video about his own band's backstage conditions that Zane hopes will become the industry standard for groupie exploitation. "We've got a scene in our movie where a girl comes to our hotel room and wants our autographs, and we tell her that she has to disrobe," Zane says. "And then we open up her ass and we try to pry quarters in her ass! It's crazy! Other bands are gonna have to rent our tapes to figure out how they should live on the road. It's gonna be a fucking blueprint, man, a guide!"

ONE DAY IN JULY, TWO THINGS HAPPENED TO MATT ZANE. Tabitha Soren interviewed him for a special on pornography, and his girlfriend Kristen tested positive for HIV.

It was supposed to be a big, exciting day. MTV was coming to interview Zane—Tabitha Soren, in the flesh!—and he was expecting a casual conversation, a chance to talk about his videos, his band, his record label, and his plan to merge the worlds of rock and porn even further. But Soren had a different sort of interview in mind. She started right in with the hardball questions. Did Zane feel responsible for Brooke Ashley, a young porn actress who had recently tested positive for AIDS? Did he feel he exploited women? Had he ever forced a girl into a sexual act? "They're asking me questions at the same time I think my girlfriend might have HIV," Zane says. "And she's sitting over there in the corner crying her eyes out."

Over the next two weeks, Kristen took seven additional tests, all of which turned out negative. Zane also tested negative. It appears that Kristen's first test was a false positive, that she doesn't have HIV. But the experience has left Zane wary. "I'm getting bigger and better in the porn business, and there's more people around who are smiling and saying like me," he says. "But when something like this happens, people perceive it like you got one of your legs broken. All the fucking hyenas start to come out. They all want to eat you and devour you alive. Because, originally, Kristen came back positive and I came back negative, and people were saying, 'Matt Zane gave it to her.' When something like this happens, you realize how much you're loved or how much you're hated."

"But at least I finally made it on MTV," the aspiring rock star says almost plaintively, apparently undeterred by his brush with mortality. "I just wish it was under better circumstances. Tabitha Soren sure was a fox, though. I really don't think she was wearing any panties." ■



Selected moments from the *Backstage Sluts* series. From left: Tura Satana's Tainie B.; Snot's Lynn Strait with porn star Tangerine in Zane's bedroom; an enthused crowd at an L.A. Snot show; Limp Bizkit's incognito Fred Durst with rock-star smokie Tangerine; a dramatization of readers throwing lunch meat at a groupie; Nashville Pussy's bassist Corey Parks.



MAKE 'EM SAY HA

If you need to haul your crew around New Orleans, better get yourself something big. Like, say, the hydraulic-spiced Range Rover driven by Cash Money Records label head Brian Williams, or the massive black Delta Force-looking tank commandeered by his brother and label copresident Ron. For flossing—or “stun’n” in local slang—there’s your basic Bentley or Benz. But for those impromptu romantic interludes, nothing beats a ragtop with reclining seats.

“This ain’t for hauling no niggas around,” says Cash Money up-and-comer Juvenile, easing his two-week-old sky blue Trans Am into “Park” outside the “ghetto supermarket”—N.O.’s corner general Key Food—just outside his Magnolia projects stomping ground. “This is a bitchmobile. Get the seat all the way back, let her put her legs over the back of them...” He flashes a dirty-dog smirk. “Lord!”

Call him an educated consumer. With a career that’s already seen its share of ups and downs, the 24-year-old Juvenile knows a good deal when he sees it. That’s

how he wound up on fast-rising Crescent City indie Cash Money, which recently signed a \$30 million distribution deal with corporate superpower Universal Records. And that’s why he is sympathetic to the average rap fan, who may be less interested in Illuminati mumbo jumbo than in good old-fashion beats.

“Nowadays when somebody goes out to buy a tape, they ain’t buying it for the name,” he says, contemplating his upcoming album, *400 Degreez*. “They wanna know how a ma’fucka sounds. The way he say his shit. A lot of rappers be saying some helliuva shit, but it takes a lot of understanding to get what they are saying. I rap for the average ma’fucka.”

On his stunningly weird debut single, “Ha,” Juvenile (né Terius Gray) talks directly to—and about—your average ma’fucka. Welterweight alim in a lime green and red FUBU jersey, he moves through his native turf with a natural ease. Rapping since his early teens, Juvenile released a solo album on Warlock Records before jumping to



NEW ORLEANS WUNDERKIND JUVENILE IS HIP-HOP'S LATEST MOUTH OF THE SOUTH
BY TONY GREEN PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMIL GS

Cash Money in 1996. LP No. 2, *Sofa Rag*, sold more than 200,000 copies; his spin-off group, the Hot Boys, moved twice that on their *Get It How You Live*.

"People keep telling me how I need to get away from the projects," he says, chilling in the Toledano Court apartment of his friend/barber Rusty. "But I feel protected here, like people got my back. I go somewhere else, I get paranoid—niggas out there be hating you for no reason."

With its catchy, "bounce"-influenced beats and *Sling Blade*-like vocal tic, "Ha" could easily thrust Juvenile out of the projects and into the limelight. Spitting out odd-metered verbal clusters like a Holiness preacher in hyperdrive, Juvenile details the life and times of a garden-variety hustler: "That's you with that bad-ass Benz, ha / That's you that can't keep an old lady 'cause you keep fuckin' her friends, ha / You gotta go to court, ha / You got served a subpoena for child support, ha."

"That's just the way we talk around here," he says, breaking down the song's insin-

uating hook—closer to "huh?" than "ha," actually. "Say you got into a fight, and somebody sees you the next day. It's like, 'My boy whipped your ass, ha?' Everybody talks like that. I just put my own Southern flavor on it."

"Ha" is so Southern it sounds virtually foreign, which these days is cash money in the bank: Not since the days of Memphis's world-historic Stax/Volt label have record buyers so frequently whistled Dixie. Like Baton Rouge's No Limit Records and Houston's Suave House, Cash Money is wisely emphasizing its regionalism rather than burying it, and after years of selling hundreds of thousands of records with minimal radio airplay or media interest (sound familiar?), Cash Money is ready for big national love.

"This company is hungry," says Juvenile. "Shit, all niggas in New Orleans are hungry. We hear all these songs coming out from people from other parts of the country trying to do our slang, taking our music. They think we ain't paying attention, but we're paying attention. We just ain't let our position be known...yet." ■





Sexy Boy

HIDE IN THE BUSHES AND SMELL THE ROSES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANETTE AURELL | FASHION BY HAIDÉE FINDLAY-LEVIN

THIS PAGE: Trooper cargo pants by Unionbay, army cotton briefs from Canal Jeans, army utility gloves from The Trader Store. OPPOSITE PAGE: Washed twill bucket hat by Quicksilver, camouflage drowsting jacket from Canal Jeans.





THIS PAGE: Twill shirt with epaulets by Diesel, dress pants by Slates, All-Star high-top sneakers by Converse. OPPOSITE PAGE: Gabardine jacket with velvet lining by Comme des Garçons Shirt, customized cargo pants by American Eagle Outfitters, army utility belt and vintage straw hat from What Comes Around Goes Around, cotton boxer briefs by Calvin Klein, All-Star low-top sneakers by Converse.



THIS PAGE: Towing jacket by The Organisation for
Returning Fashion Interest, army cotton briefs from Canal Jeans.
OPPOSITE PAGE: Shirt with customized sleeves by American
Eagle Outfitters, badge from Filmmart, wide-leg twill pants by
Diesel. For fashion information, see *Where to Buy*.





This page: 21-year-old Jerry Mooney awaits execution in Colorado State Penitentiary for his part in the killing of an elderly farmer; opposite, the room where 19 H-29th prisoners have died by lethal injection. Mooney's cell is three doors down from this one.



BURIED ALIVE

FIVE YEARS AGO, THREE TEENAGERS PARTICIPATED IN THE UNPLANNED ROBBERY AND KILLING OF A 93-YEAR-OLD MAN. TODAY, ONE OF THEM SITS ON DEATH ROW. AS STATES INCREASINGLY PUSH TO EXECUTE JUVENILES, MARK SCHONE ASKS, DOES JERRY MOONEY DESERVE TO DIE?

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOSHII KAZAMA

In McAlester, Oklahoma, they bury you before they kill you. The prisoners of H-Unit, the death-row annex of Oklahoma State Penitentiary, already live underground. Officials were so high on their \$12 million, state-of-the-art facility when it debuted seven years ago that they held an open house. Before the first convicts arrived, visitors paid \$25 to spend a night in one of H-Unit's windowless cells, and learn how secure, how free of all event, life in this concrete bunker would be. Locked down for 23 hours a day, the 147 inmates now stored in the Unit don't cause much trouble. For an hour each day, they can pace the 23-by-22-foot confines of the concrete-walled, mesh-roofed exercise yard. Three times a week, they can take a shower in the shower room. Their meals come through a cell-door slot called the "beanhole."

The female guard who lets me into this sunken fortress seems understandably bored by the quiet. She skims a file for the prisoner I'm here to see, then makes a curt phone call. In a minute I'm through the iron bars behind her desk and into a long corridor. The walls are polished concrete slabs, bare of paint or ornament except for an antique vending machine. Fluorescent bulbs and a thick yellow air duct run the length of the concrete ceiling.

A stroll down the gray hallway leads to a corner slab that says SW in big purple letters. Four stools, bolted to the floor, face four soundproof windows in the visiting area of the southwest quadrant. Behind each pane is a narrow stall, and on the other side of the Plexiglas I see straight through the stall into the quad's control room, stuffed with electronic gadgets. I rest my elbow on the window ledge, and notice a line of red dots bobbing past. Ants.

Jerry Mooney appears in the second stall, carrying a white coffee mug. Prison pale and a few inches short of six feet, he has the broad chin and blond good looks of a German-Irish mutt, accented by sleepy big eyes, a shy, crooked smile, and a scar on his left eyebrow. Once thin, he's adding pounds as he rounds 21, filling out his powder blue prison-issue shirt. A gold cross hangs around his neck. He's happy to have a visitor, since no one else comes to McAlester but his lawyers. "Are you hot out there?" Mooney asks, in a low, nasal voice. "It's really hot in here." He starts to sweat.

Mooney wants to talk about the news. This morning a high-schooler in Texas knifed his teacher, and the day before, in Jonesboro, Arkansas, two boys, 11 and 13 years old, had killed four schoolmates with a rifle. On the drive up from Dallas, I'd heard a country DJ announce the school stabbing, and say, "This ain't talk radio, but...something's wrong. What's going on with our children?"

Mooney cringes as I relate how Jonesboro's prosecutor regrets he can't try the pair as adults. "Instead of trying to punish them like adults," he responds, "they should be finding out what's wrong, why they did this. The first thing they should ask is, 'How do we fix this kid?'"

Not many people bother with that question these days. The preferred one is, "How do we punish this kid?" and with the clamor for children to be punished like adults, the answer is sometimes death. Seventy-five of America's death-row inmates are like Jerry Mooney, condemned to die for acts committed while they were under 18.

Twenty-four states now permit 17-year-olds to pay the ultimate adult penalty: 20 of those apply it to 16-year-olds, including Oklahoma. One of Mooney's two H-Unit peers, Sean Richard Sellers, may be the next of America's ex-teen killers to go.

Since the death penalty returned in 1976, only 11 juveniles have been executed, but the pace has started to quicken. Two Texas youths were lethally injected in one month this spring. New laws have cleared roadblocks, and the average nine-year wait between trial and execution will shorten. The first 11 ex-juveniles were all 24 or older when they finally died, calloused by years in prison, too wizened and adult to inspire sympathy. Before long, though, the faces will get smoother, the beards wisper, and the loudest voices want to drop the bar yet lower. Much of the public still doesn't know there's a death penalty for killers under 18, or how it's invoked—how someone like Jerry Mooney winds up on death row—but soon it may be applied to killers as young as those in Arkansas.

Mooney also senses a shift in attitude. "I feel like there's a change on the way," he says, "that people have started to realize it's wrong to do this to juveniles." But cut off from the world in H-Unit, he's got it all wrong.

LIFE HUGS THE HIGHWAY IN ELK CITY, OKLAHOMA. LOVE'S TRUCK STOP. THE DAYS Inn, and an all-night diner called the Kettle cluster around Exit 41 on the eastern edge of town, catching the traffic on I-40 between Oklahoma City and Amarillo. Old Route 66, America's Mother Road, parallels the interstate in fits and starts, as do access roads on the north and south. Beyond them lie barbed wire, red dirt, and oil wells.

Jerry's West Coast kid, found himself at age 14 in Western Oklahoma, land of endless vistas, cattle, and the world's highest per capita consumption of Dr Pepper. He showed up at Elk City High in 1991 wearing a black leather jacket and black finger-nail polish. That didn't cut it with the preps or the cowboys or even the "thugs," the local version of what he'd been back in Oregon, a stoner. But he soon found friends and took to protecting a skinny, legally blind girl named Nikki, whom the other kids tormented. Jerry and Nikki, both truck drivers' kids and West Coast exiles, bonded over their love for hair-spray bands like Poison. Jerry dated Nikki's best friend, Deana, and hung out at the skating rink.

With time Jerry adjusted, trading his 501s for Wranglers, adding some country music to his White Lion. But early in 1992, he struck up a phone relationship with his long-absent father, Mouse, an L.A. biker and ex-felon. Mouse had moved to Florida, and he invited Jerry down for spring break. Jerry drove to Tampa, and when break was over he stayed. Jerry spent eight months with Mouse, fishing, skydiving, and partying. During the school year, the 15-year-old sophomore attended classes all day, then came home and smoked pot with Dad and Dad's girlfriend. During the summer he substituted work for school, but kept partying with Dad and Rose.

In the fall, Jerry moved back to Oklahoma. He never returned to Elk City High and started running with an older, faster crowd. Nikki and his former girlfriend Deana lost touch with him. Soon he was living with a 21-year-old woman named Christa. She worked nights at the Kettle. He'd drink coffee there, waiting for her shift to end. When it was slow, he and Christa might dance to the jukebox. They were going to get married and move to Florida.

By this time he was alarming eightballs, awake for days at a time. Now 16, he weighed 102 pounds, bleeding stomach ulcer and all. In March 1993, he met yet another refugee from the West Coast, Ricky Don Fletcher. Eighteen-year-old Ricky had been in trouble with the law in California for meth and carrying a loaded weapon. His folks had moved him to Oklahoma to keep him out of trouble.

One rainy night in May, Ricky, Jerry, and Jerry's 14-year-old sister, Aimee, went driving in Ricky's big blue 1988 Buick. Jerry had been on a four-day crank run by then. He always drank beer to take the edge off crank, so the trio bought some cases. They smoked red-haired marijuana. Jerry shot some speed. For hours they made numb circuits on the flat, straight roads of Beckham County, stopping at friends' houses for more drugs and booze.

By 4 A.M. on May 11, the three were out of gas, beer, and money. They pulled into Love's, the truck stop across from the Kettle at Exit 41, right on the Washita County line. Ricky filled the car with gas. Jerry went inside and grabbed some Butterfingers and a 12-pack. He dropped his haul on the counter, spinning a stoned rap about driving to California.

While the clerk was switching off the pumps, Ricky backed the Buick up to the store's glass door, and Jerry jumped in without paying for the fuel or Bud. Ricky stomped on the gas and sped down the access road that skirts the northern edge of I-40. Two miles east of Love's in Washita County, Ricky missed a turn and the car flew into the mud. They were stuck. Tireslashed, drunk, convinced the cops were near, the teens tossed the beer and candy and hid in an alfalfa field.

A half-hour later, when they felt the coast was clear, they creased I-40 and began walking back west along the southern access road toward Beckham County and Elk City. About a mile from the Beckham line, they spied a white two-story

A JUDGE SAID MOONEY'S CHILDHOOD HISTORY WAS "ONE OF THE MOST PITIFUL THINGS I'VE EVER READ." THEN HE GAVE HIM A LIFE SENTENCE FOR ROBBERY.

H-Unit, Oklahoma's underground annex for death row inmates, is the only U.S. prison facility condemned by Amnesty International solely for its design.



PHOTO: CHRIS KAWAMURA. ALL INMATES REMOVED FOR IDENTITY

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AT THE FIRST BLOW TURLEY SAID, "OUCH,"
AT THE SECOND HE SAGGED, AND
WITH THE THIRD HE FELL.
AFTER THE OLD MAN HIT THE FLOOR, HE
WAS KICKED REPEATEDLY.



Evidence suggests Mooney's sister Aimee, above, could have inflicted the fatal blows to 93-year-old Richard Turley. She was never tried for her part in the crime.

farmhouse, framed by an isolated clump of trees. "We can call for a ride from there," Ricky proposed.

They banged on the front door of the darkened house, but got no answer. Since no one seemed to be home, they circled around the garage to the back and kicked their way through a door into a breezeway. From this little hallway, they broke open another door, finding themselves in a kitchen. That's when they learned they weren't alone.

Ninety-three-year-old Richard Turley finally awoke at the sound of breaking wood. "We just wanted to use your phone to call a tow truck," said Ricky. "Okay," said Turley, and instead of acting scared or angry he handed Jerry a yellow flashlight to hold while Ricky dialed. Aimee stood in the kitchen with the ancient farmer while Ricky started to call his mother.

Then, for no reason he can now explain, Jerry lifted the rubber flashlight like a club and brought it down on the back of Turley's head. At the first blow Turley said, "Ouch," at the second he sagged, and with the third he fell. After the old man hit the floor by the kitchen cabinet, Jerry and the others kicked him repeatedly, all 5'4" of him.

With Turley no longer moving, Jerry and Ricky searched the house, pulling out drawers. They found 70 cents, a Timex, and some car keys. Jerry plowed Turley's mint 1981 Olds straight through the garage door and roared off toward Elk City. At County Line Road, the drunk drivers missed their second turn of the night. This time they hit a telephone pole. They left their second sedan buried in mud, and as the sky lightened, they trudged the last three miles along I-40 into town. At 6 a.m., when they reached Exit 38, right next to Ricky's brother's apartment, they capped the evening by breaking a window at Brodersen's Phillips 66 so they could steal bubble gum and cigarettes. They ran from the gas station to Ricky's brother's place and put their wet shoes by the door. Aimee took a shower and washed her clothes. Around noon she and Jerry went home.

At 9 a.m., Richard Turley's son found him with his feet by the kitchen door, laying on his left side and moaning. Blood had crusted his right eye shut, and he waved his right hand above a swollen purple face. There was a flashlight in the weeds outside and an iron pot on the kitchen floor. Flesh and hair were stuck to the pot.

The cops put it together quickly, what with the two boys seen running from Brodersen's and the two abandoned cars. By dinnertime Jerry and Aimee had turned themselves in. Ricky surrendered three days later. Richard Turley lingered for six months before dying, without regaining consciousness for more than fifteen minutes at a time.

IN 1958, CHARLIE STARKWEATHER WAS AN 19-YEAR-OLD LOSER IN LINCOLN, Nebraska. He worked on a trash truck, wore leather jackets, and listened to Elvis. He combed his hair to look like James Dean, obsessively. His only friends were fellow misfit hot-rodders and 14-year-old Carl Ann Fugate. Fugate's parents didn't like Starkweather and suspected he'd gotten their daughter pregnant.

One day Starkweather got into a fight with Fugate's stepfather at the Fugate home outside of Lincoln. Starkweather killed him, then Fugate's mom, and then the girl's two-year-old stepcousin. Starkweather threw the bodies in the outhouse and the chicken coop, and for the next week he and Fugate watched T.V. and had sex. She kept cops away by mumbing through the screen door about a flu quarantine.

Once that play had run its course, the two tried to nip off a gas station, then sped to the isolated farmhouse of elderly August Meyer. There, Starkweather got his Ford

stuck in the mud. Frustrated, he shot the old man in the head. When he got his car mired again while leaving, he flagged down two clean-cut high-schoolers and shot them also. After killing three more people in Lincoln, Starkweather headed for Wyoming, where he murdered another man before he and Fugate were captured. Starkweather went to the chair, and Fugate went to prison. Elvis went into the Army.

The Starkweather spree capped an era of hysteria about wayward teens. Starkweather became an emblem of that era, an icon of rebel youth. One op-ed page called him "the little monster with the street-corner haircut and the bedroom-eyes-cum-droopy-cigarett." Two decades later, Terrence Malick noticed this high plains drifter and made the classic movie *Badlands*. Starkweather was the muse for Springsteen's album *Nebraska*.

Since the early 1900s, American society has fretted about a rising generation of violent, disobedient kids. Circa Starkweather, especially, Americans wondered what was happening to their kids, as the '50s saw the birth of the distinct youth culture we take for granted today. Greasy rockers terrified the grown-ups, whose fear was further stoked by movies—*Teenage Crime Wave*, *Riot in Juvenile Prison*—and a whole new genre of paperback, the juvenile-delinquent novel.

But the first instinct of those worried adults was concern, not censure. The famous Senate commission of the '50s chaired by Estes Kefauver proposed better schools as an answer. The presidential commission launched by Kennedy in 1961 earmarked funds for community programs. Rehabilitation, treatment, and prevention took precedence over punishment. Authorities got so uneasy about executing juveniles that they stopped for several decades.

After youth crime began to climb in the early '60s, the public's openness to "treating" young offenders waned. By the '80s, presidential and senatorial reports about teen crime opened with vows of punishment, leaving the lip service about rehabilitation to the end. Still, youth crime soared. The pendulum swung back further. Texas ended a 21-year moratorium on juvenile executions by injecting Charles Rumbaugh with poison in 1985. Three years later, the Supreme Court affirmed the right of states to kill juveniles, and set a minimum age of 16 where none was specified by the state. The landmark decision was *Thompson v. Oklahoma*. Thompson was 15 years old.

In the '90s, youth crime started to drop, and statistical analysis made it clear the spike from '83 to '92 had been due to crack and guns, and almost entirely confined to urban minorities. This had made it easy for white voters to underwrite harsh penalties for kids, and fixed in their minds the image of the dark-skinned superpredator.

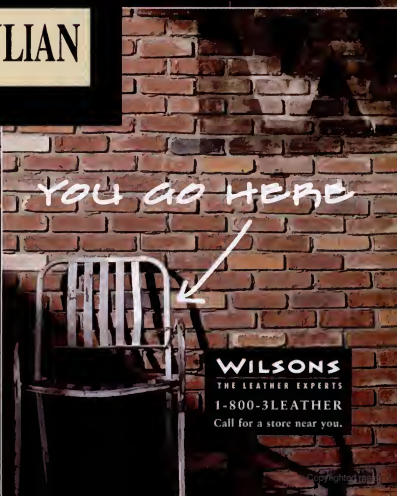
But even though the numbers had reversed course, the rhetoric kept charging forward. In 1996, Senator Fred Thompson of Tennessee opened hearings with an inaccurate reference to "skyrocketing" youth crime. By then numbers had fallen for several years in a row; they had actually never risen much in the rural kind of places inhabited by Starkweather and Jerry. Last year, 84 percent of U.S. counties experienced zero murders by juveniles. Horror at schoolyard killings in Jonesboro, Springfield, etc., masks a drop in their actual number—50 from '92 to '93, fewer than 30 this past school year.

But every school shooting gets people debating the age at which kids can be prosecuted as adults. Under *Thompson*, individual states may drop the death penalty bar below 16, and recently many legislators have talked about doing just that. Florida,



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especially, sees chronic outbreaks of soapboxing politicians who want to execute 14-year-olds. Law professor Victor Streib, an expert on the juvenile death penalty and the lawyer for Wayne Thompson in the precedent-setting case, thinks Florida is a bad place to be a bad kid. "Florida has so many retired citizens. They don't tend to like teenagers, and they're very tough on the juvenile death penalty because they're very tough on juveniles.... Teenagers are those people who menace them on skateboards at the mall."

Today, and not just in Florida, the population is grayer than it was in Kefauver's day. Many Americans don't know any children, or, increasingly, never had any. Fifty percent of all U.S. families are now kid-free. Forty years ago, reformers blamed external forces like bad schools for teen crime, but a growing estrangement from youth may explain why the public has lost patience with such explanations. A member of the jury that sentenced an Arkansas teen to death said he might've considered age a mitigating factor "if [the offender] were eight or nine, maybe."

Bill Bowers of Northeastern University has researched capital juries for seven years, interviewing 1,000 jurors from almost 300 cases. Because he has too few juvenile cases in his sample, Bowers can't make statistical generalizations about defendants under 18, but he can assert that youth usually hurts more than it helps. Juries think youth equals danger—the offender needs a harsher sentence because he might still be young when he gets out. "They consistently underestimate the amount of time someone will serve.... So they vote for death to incapacitate the youthful offender—with a lesser sentence they do some math and think, 'Well, he'll only be 30 when he gets out.'"

Youth now appears to have become one more aggravating factor in capital cases, despite the fact that under the law, it's supposed to be mitigating. The collision between a frightened public, zealous prosecutors, and errant teens has rendered such considerations as the circumstances of the crime and the background of the criminal less and less relevant. "If you gave me ten different cases and said, 'Which one will get the death penalty?' I couldn't tell you," says Streib, who catalogs juvenile death cases. "It's not the person who kills five people or the person who tortures victims.... There's no predictability to it." What can be predicted is that, statistically, the majority of kids sent to Death Row won't be Starkweathers or school-yard shooters but kids like Jerry, damaged goods from shattered homes whose first bad mistake will prove a lethal one.

JERRY DUWANE MOONEY WAS BORN OCTOBER 3, 1976, WITH THE BIRTH CORD cinched around his neck and his face bright blue. During the next decade end a half, things never got much better, according to state records and interviews with a case worker, attorneys, relatives, and friends.

His father, Mooney, was unemployed. His mother was 16-year-old Ida Griffin, who already had a 14-month-old son, Jason, by another man. Ida couldn't cope with her underweight, colicky newborn, and she wouldn't fix the gas leak in her shack that made the baby sick. Ida took off, leaving Jerry in her stepmom's hands.

She came back, but it soon became clear she couldn't cope in general. The babies ran amok in a maze of dog feces, dirty diapers, maggots, and moldy dishes. Ida established a pattern of disappearing for months, shooting drugs, and beating the kids. Mooney went on his own sabbatical, and before he disappeared for good, he punched the boys in the stomach to toughen them up.

When Jerry was almost two, the family moved from L.A. to Redmond, Oregon. In November 1978, eight months pregnant with Aimee, Ida asked Oregon's Children's Services Division for assistance. She knew she couldn't handle her growing brood. The state agency, reeling from cutbacks, knew it had little to offer. Nine times in the next four years, the agency shuffled the kids through foster homes.

In 1979, Ida committed herself to a mental hospital, the first of several stays. Doctors never agreed on a diagnosis—schizophrenic? manic depressive?—but prescribed Haldol. When she was free, she bounced between L.A., Redmond, and Vegas, with or without the kids, and with or without a string of boyfriends, many of whom beat Jason, Jerry, and Aimee.

In 1983, the kids moved to live with Ida's mother, Marilee. During a brief reunion, according to state records, Ida beat Jerry black-and-blue with a belt, and Oregon gave Marilee permanent custody. She seemed like a better choice. Marilee moved a lot, but she had a job and took off the trash. The problem with Marilee's home, however, was the rest of the people in it. Three of her own kids still lived there, and part of her hippie credo meant letting them do drugs, for which two would later compile lengthy criminal records. They forced dogs and alcohol on their grade-school nephews and niece.

Marilee left the "discipline" to her husband, Kenny Allen. An alcoholic Oklahoman who'd run away from home as a teen, Kenny passed on the lessons of his own battered youth. Marilee's daughters, Buffy and Candy, say they took constant beatings from Kenny, but when Jerry moved in, Kenny found a new target. "Jerry wasn't a bad child," says his other grandpa, Jerry Griffin. "He just always seemed to want to draw attention to himself."

A mile off the backstop in Gine Butte, outside Redmond, a trailer is hidden behind a bush at the end of a cated dirt road. Here, Marilee and Kenny made eight-year-old Jerry collect 5,000 rocks and write 5,000 sentences. They adopted a Chinese military torture they called "bone duty," in which Jerry knelt bare-kneed on cinder grains for hours. At some other address, says Jerry, Kenny strapped a book to the back of Jerry's head and hit it with a two-by-four. He skipped the cushion for additional two-by-four sessions, and when he used a shovel, a hammer, and an ax handle, and chased his step-grandson with a chain saw. A neighbor recalls seeing Kenny hit Jerry in the head with a chunk of firewood. On other occasions, according to Jason, Kenny threw Jerry through drywall and a glass window, tossed him from a balcony, tried to drown him in diathermy, and stuck him down a well without food for a few days. Jerry was unconscious at least three times as a child.

At another of Marilee's homes in Redmond, a white ranch house on 29th Street, aunts and uncles and strangers would pass out in the living room, cigarette-and-pot haze rolling through the halls. The grown-ups blew pot smoke in Jerry's face. Jason joked about the sirens and allegations, but he says now that privately he thought his home was like a POW camp. His little brother, more sensitive and needy, crumbled under the pressure. By then, Jerry was complaining of headaches, was taking Ritalin for attention-deficit disorder, and couldn't control his impulses. A counselor warned about the growth of a "ragged, unattached" child. The state tagged him "emotionally disabled," and placed him in special ed. He disrupted class. He drank, smoked cigarettes and pot, and shot dogs.

Kenny's alcoholism, meanwhile, grew more profound. One night in 1989, he called the kids into the kitchen. "Time for a pubic check," he slurred, according to a police report, and peered down the front of their underpants. Aimee claimed her "check" had included a peek at Kenny's penis. The state booked Kenny from the home.

Marilee soon snared a new man, Scott Nathan as a drug dealer, a prostitute, and one of her daughter Candy's exes, but what she saw was a handsome full-blooded Indian, 21 years her junior. Jerry considered Scott a role model and a friend. Scott even taught him how to use a clean needle. Then Scott battered Jerry so badly that his teachers saw the bruises. They called the cops.

Jerry would later regret that anyone had learned of the beating. The state sent Jerry to a foster home. Eleven-year-old Aimee told police that while Jerry was absent, Scott forced her to perform oral sex. "Jerry's job was protecting his sister," says Mike Clevenger, the family's case worker from 1989 to 1991. "He said over and over again that he should've been there."

Scott soon faced charges for both assaulting Jerry and sexually abusing Aimee. Marilee considered Jerry and Aimee "traitors," and dumped them. Ida had always wanted her kids back, and now Marilee was ready to grant her wish. She later told Clevenger that the choice between boyfriend and grandkids had been no choice at all.

While Jason moved in with a couple he'd met at church, Jerry and Aimee went to Oklahoma with Ida. No one rescued Jerry, the weaker brother. He was upbeat and considerate, but after 14 years of abuse he had a damaged psyche, a warped frame of reference, and an intensive training in making the wrong decisions. "I assumed he had some anger issues he was going to have to deal with," says former Assistant D.A. Chris Gardner, who interviewed Jerry for the case against Scott. "I assume they came rushing out [two years later] against that old man."

THE WASHITA COUNTY COURTHOUSE REARS ABOVE CORDELL, OKLAHOMA, LIKE the axis of a compass. Highway 183 approaches from due north and south; 152 from east and west. The silver dome can be seen four miles away on either road, shining above its tiny rural realm, the place of reckoning for the sito-and-service-stations towns of Washita, population 11,440.

In his first months at the Cordell jail, the drugs washed out of Jerry's system. At night he hallucinated. He covered on his cell floor as red-eyed spiders attacked him. Sometimes he heard a lullaby about the Grim Reaper, and chanted, "Safe in my playground, safe in my home" till the music went away. The judge sent him to a shrink, who declared him incompetent for trial. A sheriff's officer drove Jerry to a state mental hospital, where

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the admitting psychiatrist, after telling Jerry he couldn't take anyone under 18, conducted a quick interview, dubbed him competent, and shipped him back to Cordell.

Jerry wrote jaunty letters to friends back then, the kind with parenthetical "ha ha"s, sounding as if he'd get out, but he also attempted suicide at least twice. Like many jailed teens, he tried to hang himself with a bedsheet, and like some jailed teens, he failed. He called mental health hotlines in the middle of the night to talk about his visions.

After a joint preliminary hearing, Jerry's codefendant, Ricky Fletcher, went to trial in November 15, 1993. The jury convicted Ricky of robbery three days later, and recommended a sentence of 20 years. The next day, Richard Turley, who'd been lying semi-conscious with tuberculosis in his throat and stomach since the assault, died of pneumonia. Ricky's legal situation was different from Jerry's. He had made only one statement to police, and in that statement insisted he had no part in the assault or robbery. Jerry himself took the stand, against his lawyer's advice, to swear that Ricky hadn't touched Turley, contradicting his earlier claims that Ricky had helped with the kicking. In part, Jerry has said he was spurred by Aimee's claim that she was carrying Ricky's child.

Jerry, meanwhile, entered a blind plea—meaning he had no guarantee of sentence—on the robbery charge. He expected to receive 20 years, like Ricky. Turley died a week later. At his sentencing in March 1994, the judge said Jerry "hasn't had a chance" and called Jerry's bio "one of the most pitiful things I've ever read," before stunning Jerry with a life term for robbery.

Jerry now faced a second charge—premeditated murder. The D.A. would try to prove that Jerry had intended to kill Turley—had decided to kill him, and acted on that decision. (Under the law, such intent to kill can be formed in an instant.) For a year and a half, Jerry waited to return to court, first in Washita and then in McAlester. His murder trial didn't begin till August 1995, a month when the temperature in Cordell hit 105.

The jury saw a defendant nearly 19 years old, three inches taller than in May '93, and 75 pounds heavier. Jerry gazed back at a panel of farmers, clerks, and grandmas. For a week, the graying jury heard the tale of a drug-addled teen outsider, killer of a widower who'd farmed nearby since Territory days. The jury convicted Jerry of first-degree murder. Jerry's lawyer now had to convince this same group of 12 that her client didn't deserve to die. In the sentencing phase, she had a chance to raise the issue of mitigating circumstances. Nothing could be more mitigating than Jerry's early life, which meant, at 16, his whole life. The state would try to prove aggravating circumstances: that the crime was cruel and committed to cover up the break-in, and that Jerry posed a continuing threat to society.

Three months before the murder trial, a man named David Cox became Jerry's cellmate at McAlester. After a week with Jerry, Cox sent Assistant District Attorney Luther Cowan a letter offering to testify. He took the stand that August to make some remarkable claims. He swore that Jerry had admitted smashing Richard Turley in the head with a flashlight and an iron pan, with the express intent of robbing and killing the old man. He also described letters between Jerry and his father in which Jerry concocted a plan to break out of jail by bribing a guard with drugs. Cox denied that self-interest (i.e., a deal with the D.A.) had motivated his testimony. He came forward, he said, because the same kind of punks had "beat down" his own granddad in 1986.

None of the mitigating factors—Jerry's age, his childhood trauma, the fact that he was acting under the influence of drugs—meant much to the Cordell jury. Fomer A.D.A. Gardner and social worker Cleaver even flew cross-country to say that the state of Oregon had failed to protect Jerry. In the end, only two jurors expressed a preference for a lesser penalty. After eight hours, while Jerry waited with his old friend Nikki, listening to White Lion and sharing smokes, chips, and Dr Pepper, the two holdouts caved. One of the jurors cried when the death sentence was read aloud.

Jerry's fate didn't merit notice outside Oklahoma. Streib, the death penalty expert, says there's nothing exceptional about his case, as condemned kids go—a break-in gone bad, an elderly victim, kids in a group. Some legal and evidentiary factors make Jerry's death sentence questionable, however. His lawyers are appealing the murder trial itself as double jeopardy—arguing that the judge in the robbery case effectively gave him life as punishment for Jerry's death. The capital case, therefore, became his second trial for the same murder.

In the murder case, Jerry's lawyers argue in their still-pending appeals, the state relied on several witnesses it should have known were dishonest. Jerry's appellate lawyers learned many relevant facts about the state's informant, David Cox. A veteran "jailhouse snitch" with a history of mental illness, Cox got his info about the case from reading Jerry's legal papers. He never had a grandpa who died from a beating, and after the trial, despite his claims of no deal, he became a "protected prisoner" and was transferred to a medium-security facility. There were no letters produced in which Mouse and Jerry hatched a commando raid on the Cordell jail. But most important, and contrary to Cox's testimony, Jerry may not even be the one who administered the fatal blows to Turley.

AS A CHILD, JERRY WAS
HIT IN THE HEAD BY
HIS STEPFATHER WITH
A TWO-BY-FOUR,
A SHOVEL, A HAMMER,
AND AN AX HANDLE.
ACCORDING TO
A NEUROLOGIST,
HIS BRAIN STILL HASN'T
FULLY RECOVERED.



Next-generation Oklahomans, Jerry's cousins Susy and Tim.

THE EVIDENCE FROM THE CRIME SCENE—THE INJURIES TO THE FRONT AND SIDE OF Jerry's skull, marks on Turley's face that match those of the pot, the direction of the blood splatter on the wall—suggests that after Turley had been knocked down, one of the three grabbed the handle of the three-pound, half-inch-thick iron pan, a pan in which Turley had cooked popcorn earlier that evening, and swung it like a tennis racket at his head. Twice the person swung, or maybe more. Blood sprayed up from a point near the floor onto the kitchen cabinets and the ceiling. Raised circles on the pan's bottom made blue, ring-shaped bruises on Turley's chin and the side of his head. From the first hours of the investigation, police fixed on the pan as the murder weapon.

In her first statement to police, soon after the incident, Jerry's sister Aimee claimed that Richard Turley had locked his kitchen door and grabbed her butt, and that Jerry had responded by blurring, "We got to knock this guy out." She denied touching the victim. In her second statement, she conceded that the elderly farmer hadn't felt her behind. She suggested the old man might have hit his head on an iron pot as he fell, and that she might have stumbled over his body.

The day before the preliminary hearing for the robbery case in July 1993, A.D.A. Cowan called Aimee and her lawyer in for a meeting. He and Joe Ferrero, the detective who'd been interviewing the three kids, wanted to clear up a few "inconsistencies" before Aimee testified. At first, all three suspects had denied striking the old man. Ferrero had warned each one that he planned to send the flashlight and the iron pot out to be tested for fingerprints, and that before he did they had a chance to tell the truth. Jerry then admitted wielding the flashlight, but denied he or anyone else touched the pan. Ricky maintained that he'd touched neither.

After her meeting with Cowan, Aimee took the stand and, alone among the three kids, admitted touching the pan. She said she'd merely thrown it, and that maybe it struck Turley in the skull. Apparently satisfied, Cowan gave Aimee, the only one of the three too young to qualify for the death penalty, immunity from prosecution in return for turning state's evidence.

At the preliminary hearing, and later at Ricky's robbery trial and the preliminary hearing on Jerry's murder charge, she testified to Jerry and Ricky conspiring in Turley's living room before the assault. Her words helped establish Jerry's alleged intent to kill. She described Jerry striding into the kitchen and whacking the old man in the skull with the flashlight and the three of them kicking Turley while he lay on the floor.

By July 1994, however, the month of the pretrial on Jerry and Ricky's murder charge, Aimee had told dozens of versions of the Turley incident, and a parade of ex-friends had sworn under oath that she was a compulsive liar. Research by Jerry's appellate lawyers turned up her habit of making, and retracting, charges of sexual assault. In the summer of '93, she claimed two black strangers had dragged her into a car and sexually raped her, saying, "This one is for Turley." Doctors examined Aimee and ruled out sexual assault. After she made and then recanted yet another rape allegation against her mom's boyfriend in late '94, the court ordered her to get therapy for lying. Medical records dated a dozen invented pregnancies—including the baby she told Jerry was Ricky Fletcher's.

Aimee was the only witness who could implicate Ricky in the Turley beating, and Ricky's defense team realized they could discredit her. Private investigator Tom Hankins found plenty of witnesses who insisted Aimee had bragged that she and her brother had done it all, and that Ricky had merely watched. And they said Aimee

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"TO BE CONDEMNED IS TO SAY MY LIFE HAS NO POSITIVE VALUE. I'M BEYOND CORRECTION OR REHABILITATION," SAYS JERRY. "THAT'S NOT TRUE."

told them she'd done more than throw a pan. She said she hit Turley in the head, repeatedly. In May 1994, Hankins videotaped Aimee telling a group of girls she had "accidentally hit [Turley] in the head with the pan."

The state was still seeking to put Ricky to death for Turley's murder. Armed with the statements and videotape, Ricky's defense team got Ricky a deal: 25 years as an accessory after the fact. By then, however, Lurley Cowan had already prosecuted Jerry Mooney for murder and four times told the jury that Jerry swung the pan. He had dropped Aimee as a witness, avoiding a cross-examination about her problem with lying and her role in the night's events, and substituted Cox, who put the pan in Jerry's hand. When questioned about this, Cowan will only say that, legally, Jerry could've been tried for first degree murder—and sentenced to death—regardless of who dealt the heaviest blows in Richard Turley's farmhouse.

I ask Aimee if she would revisit her story to save Jerry's life. "What if you stood up in court and told them you swung the pan, not threw it?" I ask her. "What if you said, 'I stood there and hit him in the head with the pan?' Would that be true?"

"Not really," she replies. "Kind of."

JERRY HASN'T SEEN AIMEE OUTSIDE A COURTROOM IN YEARS. "TELL JERRY I LOVE him," Aimee says, "and the only reason I don't write is I don't have any stamps." Ida can't afford collect calls, but visits every few years. Jerry's cell partner has become his family. "B.K. is my brother," he says, "and my father and my mother." They live next to the execution holding pen where the inmate on the bubble goes to wait out his final days. Next to that is the shower, and beyond that the execution chamber.

Out of consideration for his cell partner, Jerry tries not to pace. He sleeps on the floor by the bench of his 6' by 15' cell, instead of on his poured-concrete cot. He watches TV, listens to the three attorned his radio gets, reads John Gribham and Dean Koontz novels and self-help books. His cronies from Kettle days have scattered. Ex-fiancee Christa won't talk about Jerry, much less to him. His final message to her is tattooed on his left pec, a heart-shaped brick wall that says, BREAK THIS ONE, BITCH.

In his cell he reads psychology texts, slowly, like Scripture, so he can learn how 16-year-old Jerry got so bent. He writes letters to his family and asks them the same questions he asks the books. Most recently he asked Jason why only one brother got saved. "What was it about you that was so different? What was it about me that people saw?"

I suggest to Jerry that he was programmed to fail, that his childhood made disaster inevitable. Marilee once told him, joking, that he'd end up in prison, and after Jerry took a few joyrides in Oklahoma, that prediction was repeated by a cop. "I don't think it was preordained or that the way I was raised caused me to be here," he replies. "Even though I had a certain way of thinking at the time, I still had a willing and capable mind." On the other hand, at 16, he also thought he should be married and living on his own. "My judgment," he concedes, "may not have been too good." After the Turley assault, Jerry's judgment told him to protect his little sister, like he thought he'd failed to do in Oregon. He told authorities that no one touched the pan, and Turley must have knocked it off the counter. Later, he told a few friends and relatives a more plausible story, blaming Aimee.

But Jerry now wonders if some of the things Aimee has said in the past are really true, including the Scott Nathan molestation. "When you ask Aimee why she tells a lie, she says, 'I don't know, it sounded good.'" Does she know she's lying? "I don't know anymore. I would think she doesn't. Aimee said things that weren't true...." He pauses. "That'd be like to believe she didn't know were a lie because they caused me a lot of problems."

In cell KK, he's still rationalizing. The jury's death sentence didn't shock him. Jerry might've seen too much youth crime on the news and gotten desensitized. "Some of them probably said if they had a chance to make a difference, they were on a jury where a juvenile was involved, they'd be hard on him to teach everybody else a lesson."

But what that lesson teaches, as Jerry writes me later, is that he's worthless. "To condemn me to death solves nothing!" he fumes, his cool pose forgotten. "To be condemned is to say my life has no positive value, I'm beyond correction or rehabilitation. That's not true." Jerry comes from the same background as most of the kids on death row: unstable home; mental illness; brain injury; sexual, physical, and drug abuse. A 1999 study by a New York University criminologist found that most condemned teens suffer from one or many of those conditions. Twelve of the 14 tested had been severely beaten, nine had brain injuries or disorders. Late last year

a neurologist examined Jerry and determined that he too suffered from brain injury. "Even now," wrote Georgetown University's Dr. Jonathan Pincus, "his frontal lobes are not working properly." One theory suggests that an impulse-controlling brain chemical called myelin, which isn't fully formed in teens, is still less developed in violent teens, especially those who've been hit in the head repeatedly. But the condition gets better with time. That's what happens when teens grow up. At 21, says Jerry, "I tend to think things through a little more." A second doctor who examined him, psychologist Sven Helge, says he doesn't fit any known profile of someone likely to offend again.

Despite this and despite the mitigating nature of his painful biography—not to mention the questions about his intent to kill and the fact that he may not have inflicted Turley's fatal injuries—Jerry could be executed by his 28th birthday. With a different jury, prosecutor, or courtroom, he might be doing 20 years or life without parole. "What are we saying," asks Steven Hawkins, director of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, "when we've got somebody like Jerry on Death Row? Obviously with a little more guidance and different role models he might've been a different 16-year-old."

AN HOUR WEST OF MCALISTER, JERRY'S AUNT CANDY HAS TURNED UP IN A SMALL town on the Canadian River called Konawa. She lives off a dirt farm road in a trailer without a phone. Puppies run loose. Two little girls, Candy's daughter and a friend, play in the grass by the bedroom window. Inside the bedroom, clothes lie in mounds.

Candy sits on the den sofa watching TV, a blanket pulled up to her neck. She moved to Oklahoma two months ago but hasn't yet managed to visit Jerry. For a year or two back in the early '80s, she says, she was the one taking care of him. The one time in the '90s she's seen Jerry was in court. But the case has had an effect on her, she insists, making her a more vigilant mother, especially when it comes to her 12-year-old son.

"Back in Washington," says Candy, "Timothy tried to burn my house down. He also broke into a house and started a fire in it. He got in trouble with that. The police were involved. They told him, 'If it happens again, you will go to jail.'"

That was a year ago. In Oklahoma he hasn't met the police yet, but he is still acting out. On the day of my visit he killed a mother turtle with a rock. Candy was furious. "The babies were newly hatched. He was brutal. He stuck a stick in her mouth and did all this other stuff. I told him, 'Timothy, you just committed murder. Why did you do that?'"

Tim's father, Candy's ex-husband, used to knock Tim around. Blows to the skull have left him with the mind and emotions of an eight-year-old. Tim's developmental problems and the arson have caused both Jason and Jerry to worry. Jerry, especially, frets, helpless in his cell as his little cousin begins to reenact familiar struggles. He sees the parallels between his life and Timothy's—a troubled kid with a troubled mom, adrift with his baby sister in outback Oklahoma, where no one will intervene.

The next day I find Tim at a housing project in town. Candy is splitting up with her boyfriend, and Tim is sleeping over with a friend and a baby-sitter. I bring a photographer along to take Tim's picture. Excited, Tim changes into a dress shirt and brushes his hair and even slaps on cologne. The baby-sitter, a middle-age woman in a don't say we're T-shirt, shakes her head sadly. "I feel bad for him and his sister," she says. "He's not getting what they need. He's a great kid."

Tim does seem like a great kid, as sweet, eager to please, and hyper. While the photographer sets up outside, he shows me where another kid he's sprayed fake snow in his hair. When his pal goes into the next room, I ask him a question.

"Timothy?"

"Did you happen to kill a turtle yesterday?"

He looks scared. "No."

"Oh. Your mom told me you did."

The confusion fits as he comes up with an alibi. "This great big anapping turtle tried to bite my toe and I went—oh—he kicks his right foot—and it flew through the air and hit a rock and it's still bursted open like this right off and it died." Then his friend wanders back in and Tim shows him how huge the turtle had been and they start talking about how they walked through a stream this afternoon. The turtle and I are forgotten.

I see his shoes and his friend's by the door, still wet, and think of Aimee and Jerry's wet sneakers in 1993. I recall that arson and animal torture are among the most reliable predictors of adult criminality. Then Tim runs outside, ready for his close-up. ■

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A black and white photograph of Lucinda Williams. She is shown from the chest up, wearing a light-colored, possibly lace-trimmed, top. She is holding an acoustic guitar and looking down at it. The background is dark and out of focus.

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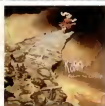
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KORN

TITLE...
Follow the Leader

LABEL...
 Immortal/Epic

HARVEST OF SORROW

For millions of kids, Korn's house of pain feels like a home away from home. by RJ Smith

Korn must surely be the only band ever to distribute a press kit that announces "several members...have experienced the catastrophic effects of child abuse." That announcement is also easily the biggest "duh!" in Korn's whole press kit. Listen to *Follow the Leader* and you know this band is damaged goods. Korn try to scream their way out of a black-and-blue bedroom, with words that level blame and thudding queasy riffs that try to even the score. And they still can't break free.

At a time when "protecting children" has become the motor powering a nationwide moral panic, when teenage cafeteria killers get massive coverage, and when every politico's pet peeve—tobacco, crime, Internet porn, you name it—is sold to the public as a way of safeguarding the young, Korn must be the most political band in the country. Their music has scared the shit out of high-school administrators, and you can hear the Christian righteous warning America from the pulpit: *Don't let your kids become children of the Korn*. The band's first two albums went platinum without support from radio or MTV, and *Follow the Leader*, sleeker and more focused, seems sure to follow. All of which indicates that far from being locked in his room alone with his wretched feelings, Korn singer Jonathan Davis has plenty of company.

Calling Korn the most political band around is precisely the kind of thing that would have the band themselves reaching for more ice coldies, then belching en masse. They don't really believe in anything themselves, other than that when your head hits the 7-Eleven parking lot, it really hurts, man. On *Follow the Leader* Korn even cover Cheech & Chong's invincible "Eearache My Eye," cameo by Cheech Mann, yet they aren't really part of the fart-lighting South Park nation. Even when they try to be funny, Korn are pathetic, and I mean that in sort of a good way—they can't help but show you what torn-up sock



Purge overkill: Korn's Jonathan Davis straining to achieve catharsis

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REVIEWS

puppets they are. For all their ugly leashing out at targets that have regularly included women and "faggots," they radiate more pain than hate, the kind of pain they never got over.

"Dead Bodies Everywhere" opens with music-box tinkling, then plows into dumbed-down Rage Against the Machine slab guitar and bass-popping. "You really want me to be a good son? / Why do you make me feel like no one?" Davis growls. Korn use haunted-house minor chords and guitar strings that squeal like theremins to give their child abuse lyrics the feel of slasher flicks. And if they identify with the stalker, they always cast themselves as the ultimate victims. "I see your pretty face, smashed against the bathroom floor / What a disgrace, who do I feel sorry for?" Davis says on "Pretty." The answer to that one is easy: He feels sorry for himself.

When Rage Against the Machine, the band Korn most resembles, borrow from hip-hop, it's a multicultural gesture that rocks like Everest. But Korn are, ahem, post-p.c.: They see foul-mouthed, bawling rappers as expressing Ultimate Taboos, and they feel right at home. For Korn (and their buds Limp Bizkit) hip-hop's noise won't save the world, but it keeps the victims from going bonkers. On '96's *Life Is Peachy* they covered Ice Cube's "Wicked," and Cube returns the favor by guesting on "Children of the Korn." Elsewhere Pharcyde's Tre works out on "Cameltois," and Davis

and Bizkit's Fred Durst attempt a hip-hop "battle."

But for all the breakbasta that cool the molten guitar, Korn are, in the end, a million miles from Compton. They are, in fact, from Bakersfield, West Coast hillbilly music mecca. Davis' dad was even a member of Buck Owens's Buckaroos, and Radio KORN, as it happens, was the hillbilly station on a regular *Hee Haw* sketch. Korn are unmistakably referencing personal torture, but they haven't figured out what to do with abuse except visit it on others. And so the incest, the booing, the rage against God and the beastin' of their women all end up seeming like nothing but one more dumbasta hillbilly parody.

They've raised a bumper crop of Korn nuts in the way Metallica and underground rappers did, by mattering at a strictly word-of-mouth level. Korn scare all the right people—critics and faculty—but resonance is only supposed to be a beginning, not an end in itself. They don't have to grow up, they don't have to achieve "closure," but if they're not going to make good records, what's the point of going through all of that therapy? ■



HOLE

THE
Celebrity Skin

LABEL—
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After four years, the girl with the Most-Talked-About tiara goes on record. I'm not counting the galaxy of interviews, fashion spreads, film strips, soundbite opa, and stray performance pieces—the ephemera of her incarnation as the Queen of All Media. She can play that way till the stars come loose from their mooring, and it's all still bullshit; whatever La Courtney or Le Public thinks, it's not her job even to mean what she says. However engaging she is, she's not our friend, or our enemy, but our melody maker. Love's job is to musically engage our hormonal desperation and set off a few super-cranial light bulbs and maybe add another record to the arcana of great '90s music. All that other stuff is just moonlighting.

Nonetheless, job skills fade and distraction happens; by the time Courtney started channeling Stevie Nicks it seemed unlikely the band—and the rock star Love—could escape becoming a historical conversation piece. Instead, *Celebrity Skin* strolls shrewdly into the historical conversation. It's a record filled with quotation and reference, backtalk and revision. But it doesn't enter the discussion as bad bitch of the fight club or in the name of Oasis-esque historicizing. It just sits down at the table and sets to conversing with the boys on the radio, taking as an assumption that's where the action is. A cohort of our culture will call this sleeping with the enemy. Maybe so. Maybe so what; there are too many great songs, and this is a magnificent pop record.

Pop is the crucial term: *Celebrity Skin* carries the conversation beyond the

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WESTWOOD ONE





MARILYN MANSON
mechanical animals

september 15th

traditional postpunk loop of raw power and pretty poison, dirty glam and curdled self-loathing. These things all figure. But Love manages also to chat up early pop star Shakespeare and latter-day saint Stephen Melkum, hi-cred novelist Denis Johnson, and to life Art Alexakis; the title track off-quotes Burt Bacharach. Twice.

Still, pop isn't a reference game; it's a way of life on which the record beats every thing. *Celebrity Skin* is likely to piss off anyone still indulging in the fantasy of Courtney as punk Goddess/feminist Fury; if you want the howl and the open wound, you'll have to dredge Puget Sound. But that's not where this record is calling from; it dials in from a more southern Pacific. After various production peregrinations, Michael Beinhorn ends up finding a basted mix of sweetness and weight: ice cream grunge, with a shock of fab guitar parts from Eric Erlandson plus a gang of new-wave synthesizers. Most of the music was written by the band, with free advice from a Smashing Pumpkin (five tracks), and help from both a Go-Go and a Blinker the Star on "Reasons to Be Beautiful." In exchange for the astonishing consistency of mood that made *Live Through This* a breakwater of '90s rock, *Celebrity Skin* produces a catarsis of great songs, spectacularly polished.

But if, in true pop fashion, the album is obsessed with the glittery appeal of sonic surfaces, it only matches the parallel fixation on the erotic, deceptive allure of bodily surfaces. In that regard, from lyrics to love-me production, *Celebrity Skin* is an L.A. record. And, like Courtney the Culture Star, the record sells the prettiness it often stands against. That is, the album knows exactly how it's fucked-up and makes music out of the mess. I keep forgetting whether that's hypocrisy or rock 'n' roll.

Most obviously, the album is Angeleno in its setting, from the razor "Celebrity Skin" ("hooker/waitress/model/actress—oh just go nameless") to the despairing charmer "Malibu," a beach-town companion to Everclear's "Santa Monica." No less SoCal are the star's insider status in the cult of the image and the way her vocals have modulated from the former riveting roar into a creamy cry, luxurious and yearning.

But for all that, *Celebrity Skin* isn't just Fleetwood Mackin'. Less wasted on decadence, the record is better at mapping out metaphysics of pop music and youth: the conspiracy of pure appearance, temporariness, and beauty, all of which we will betray and be betrayed by in turn. In the mirror of every brilliant surface is the terror of its decay. On the album-closing "Petals," the incessant flower imagery of *Live Through This* has turned toward autumn: "I miss the sweet boys in the summer of their youth... all the darling buds of May / They fall with no sound, they carry you down." And the music descends and descends a sickly slope, the pretty guitars falling out of tune.

The same rotting haunts the center of "Reasons to Be Beautiful," the best song of 1998. The song's architecture gleams like a postmodern-gothic Hotel California: "Miles and miles of perfect skin / I swear I do, I fit right in," says Love in a mantra she falls into and forgets, substituting "Miles and miles of perfect sin." And suddenly everything is wrong, as she watches the image corrode: "So pretty oh summer babe we'll never know / And faded like a rose." But it's not just more flowery talk. This song is her version of total war, lining up the record's litany of concerns and turning them in on herself. By the time she reaches "everything I am will be bought and sold," mere autobiography threatens to overrun everything.

There's probably no performer in the world so doomed to autobiography as Courtney Love, and it's a fate she's had a fair part in sealing. But this trip catches us as much as her, and some of *Celebrity Skin*'s most delicious moments come when we are freed from having to hear the album as a personal profile. "Heaven Tonight" is adorable enough to have been temporarily titled "The Pony Song": "Here comes a sun in the form of a girl / She's the finest sweetest thing in the world," she burbles over a chorus-happy arpeggio. When the Duran Duran aynths kick in "Rio"-style, there's nothing to do but smile: a love song.

That's not to suggest the album is bestest lightest. Nonetheless, it only falters when it blows off prettiness altogether: "Use Once and Destroy" hangs on a riff only Beavis and Butt-head could love, and "Playing Your Song" stays diminutive, a temper in a teapot. But that's it. Everything else is the good shit, from the candy-coated darkness of "Boys on the Radio" (an electrifying version of an *Unplugged* classic: double your sugar! double your corn!) to the teen-spirited outrage of "Awful" ("It was punk / Yeah it was perfect / Now it's awful").

The challenge for *Celebrity Skin* is whether it can hear above the din, the life stories and public displays of affliction. But like all great records, it's at its best when it attempts the impossible task of swallowing all that noise. At the end of "Reasons to Be Beautiful," rather than turning away from the tell-all, the singer puts her back into it until the song transmutes into an answer to her husband's suicide note, talking back to the lost summer: "When the fire goes out / You better learn to fake," she sings, knowing the last say counts for nothing and having it anyway. "It's better to rise than to fade away," she promises, as if all pop stars weren't doomed to do both. JOSHUA CLOVER



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REVIEWS

BELLE AND SEBASTIAN

TITLE...
The Boy With the Arab Strap

LABEL...
Matador



Belle and Sebastian are wimps and proud of it, so naturally their cardinal virtue is modesty. Singer/guitarist Stuart Murdoch is the closest thing the octet has to a leader, but being singularly modest, he's turned over some of the songwriting and singing to his bandmates on this third album: Stuart David's "Spaceboy Dream" is of a piece with his recent solo single as Looper; Isobel Campbell sings the twee, breathy "Is It Wicked Not to Care?"; and Stevie Jackson's two contributions reveal a potentially unhealthy fascination with the music biz (one's named after Sire Records founder Seymour Stein, the other after the pop zine *Chickfactor*). Being pathologically modest, melodist supreme Murdoch has left some of his own most striking songs off the album—the sizable e-mail list of Belle cultists is goggle at the omissions.

Or maybe Murdoch's just pathologically like a fox. Belle and Sebastian have always played hard-to-get, limiting their first album *TigermilK* to 1,000 (vinyl) copies and playing in public only a few times a year. Murdoch knows full well that hearing one song more than others can get in the way of an album's flow, so even the songs that might naturally walk tall are convinced to slouch a little. The title track (an "arab strap" is a marital aid; Arab Strap is a fellow Scottish band) has what could be a big-bump "Jean Genie"/"Everybody Wants to Rule the World" groove—but Murdoch sings it like he's worried about starting an avalanche, and he keeps on swallowing his words even after the band fades out. Speak up, boy!

Arab Strap is a more mature album than 1997's *If You're Feeling Sinister*, less concerned with just-postadolescent torment, which is to say it's concerned with more mature torment—frustrating erotic fantasies, the sense of too much time passing, the heroine of last year's triumphant "Lazy Line Painter Jane" single reappearing as an overpaid art-world hack. The hormone-dazed mumble of the earlier records has turned to exquisite stasis, graced with subtle string and horn arrangements. "Dirty Dream #2" disguises its Motown best in a swirl of strings and organ, and though "Sleep the Clock Around" builds toward what might be a tremendous climax, it's kept in its place by '70s synth chintz and a drum-machine two-step.

What comes out of all this self-restraint is a pastoral album whose minor accomplishments add up to tremendous power when heard as a whole. Murdoch and his disciples—as much a chamber music ensemble as a rock band at this point—refuse to do anything in broad strokes, which means nothing here wears out over repeated listenings, but also that you have to lean into the album to get much out of it. Listen closely, though, and you'll relish the fine filigreed details, the unexpected instrumental accents they can pull off only by having half the group sit out half a song, Murdoch's wry turns of phrase and flip-flops between intertextual cleverness and heart-on-sleeve honesty. Modesty is also a virtue for people who know exactly how good they are. DOUGLAS WOLK



DJ SPOOKY (THAT SUBLIMINAL KID)

TITLE...
Riddim Warfare

LABEL...
Outpost



It's been more than 45 years since the musique concrète pioneers started splicing tape together, but some people still seem to think it's pretty clever to make music out of other bits of music. Take DJ Spooky: Despite the fact most of his audience is thoroughly acquainted with the concept of collage, he still feels the need to point out that "this is music made from fragments of the world." *Riddim Warfare* is peppered with authorial micro-lectures such as this, delivered in an uneasy tone midway between professor and B-boy. It's a shame, because this music is more than capable of speaking for itself.

Despite its ungainly, bombastic title, *Riddim Warfare* is far from s call to arms.

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Spooky seems entirely free of the political ferocity that inspired an earlier sampler-wielding generation to issue rallying cries such as "Welcome to the Terrorzone." Instead, track titles such as "Polyphony of One" reveal self-absorption—or as Spooky might put it, a preoccupation with selfhood in the age of postmodern flux. Feinting and morphing, writhing with perpetual microbial motion, Spooky's music dramatizes the struggle to escape the straitjacket of having a single voice or definitive style.

Slipping free from its creator's heavy-handed signposting ("it's like a recombinant, I'm pulling all this stuff from history"), Spooky's music is fluid, intuitive, and unexpectedly expressive. Although the overt intention seems to be a celebration of limitless possibility, the mournful arpeggios, echoplexed blues snatches, Oriental splinters, and keening, wordless voices tell another story—an anomie voiced explicitly in the Kool Keith collaboration "Object Unknown," with its urban dislocation lyric and matchlessly sad delivery, like a lost kid on a hostile sidewalk.

In an urban culture where personality can seem to be little more than the sum of one's consumer preferences, Spooky himself is a kind of hardwired Lotus Eater, endlessly tweaking a dizzying panoply of sources and immersing himself in tiny variations of tone and texture. Spooky peoples his musical theater with a host of avant-luminaries and margin-walkers, but beyond their potent brand-name resonance, the Thurston Moore and Arto Lindsay cameo carry no more weight than any other elements of the mix: the wayward beats, the smeared of orchestral color, the shoals of scratching that pan violently across the stereo-field.

Atomizing emotion and experience, arranging the notes into fleeting mosaics, the best of *Riddim Warfare* eloquently emphasizes the uncertainty of our identities. "It's like painting with fragments of memory," Spooky declares. But we never quite recognize ourselves in the finished picture. **CHRIS SHARP**

Bikini Kill



THE SINGLES

BIKINI KILL

TITLE

The Singles

LABEL

KILL Rock Stars



JULIE RUIN

TITLE

Julie Ruin

LABEL

KILL Rock Stars



It's probably dumb to predict the historical impact of a band just seven years after it flared onto the scene. But the music of the now-defunct Bikini Kill shows every sign of enduring. *The Singles* boils down the band's brief career into a package as compact and abrasive as a scouring pad. The nine songs hang together more cohesively, and more persuasively than any of the Bikini Kill albums. And *The Singles* characterizes better than almost any single work by any band exactly what not grrr!—the miniature revolution sparked in the early '90s when young women suddenly started making music without really knowing how, just as zillions of boys had been doing for decades—meant, and why it still matters.

"Come here, baby / Let me kiss you like a boy does," Kathleen Hanna sings on "New Radio," her voice both a scowl and an erotic come-on, a voice that intuitively recognizes "Twist and Shout" as the great seduction song of the latter 20th century. Bikini Kill proved that the classic elements of rock 'n' roll can always be updated, and could still anel. "Strawberry Julius," with its sugar-and-sulfur surf beat, is music to pony by, to tear apart your pink little-girl bedroom by, to burn down the school by. *The Singles* is more like a hating, pissed-off tiger than a static document. It invites nostalgia, only to nip it up with kitty-cat claws.

The self-titled debut by Julie Ruin—a new alias for Kathleen Hanna—proves not grrr! has by no means vaporized: It's become transmuted but not softened. Hanna doesn't

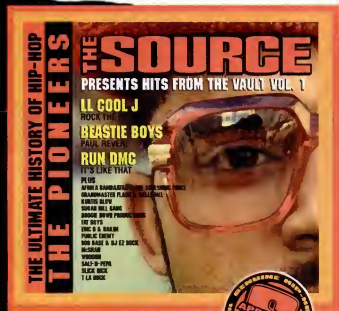
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THE SOURCE

REVIEWS

Singles by Charles Aaron

"I'm not going to be rapin' when I'm 30; I want to start my own production company and get into acting." This is the tired refrain of every MC who just shot from underground hustler to big plays, filmed a pricey video, and now thinks he's too sexy for his FUBU pullover. Here's a thought: How about making a full album that's not padded with derivative skits featuring "the Devil" and songs dissing "fake niggas"?

ATOM AND HIS PACKAGE, "Behold, I Shall Do a New Thing" (Vital Music) Touted by a friend as a "fat Jewish punk kid with a sequencer, who looks like Elvis Costello and covers the Gero Boys," Atom is more like Woon if they laid off the dirtweed and wrote some real jokes. The A side is a heartfelt rant

mini-dress (perky trip-hop melody), scrunches her aching feet into a pair of glitzy high heels (sultry taunting vocal), firmly applies Medea Magenta lipstick (crunching guitar riff), and plays the role of modern rock's Queen Supreme Being like Jessica Lange eating scenery in *Blue Sky* (swooning Goth-chorus choir). No, it's (not) an act.



The blue singer: Atom assaults eyes and ears at the 1998 Philadelphia Punk Fren.

JUVENILE, "Ha" (Universal)

Over an eerily dinky, 808-rattling riddim, New Orleans MC Juvenile offers up four minutes of slurred responsive reading like a Baptist deacon trying to sleep off a hangover during Sunday service. "You got served a subpoena for child support to Ha!... You done wrestled from Nike to Reebok / Ha!" Truly mind-boggling.

POSSUM DIXON, "Lenny's Song (Holding)" (Interscope)

I'll concede they have the most embarrassing band name this side of REO Speedealer, and that their last album sold less than my Aunt Fannie Lee's drum'n'bass side project, but the lead singer has awesome cheekbones and a real gift for translating true-life tragedy into oblique pop urgency. Produced by Weezer mentor Ric Ocasek, this last-chance single includes a quaint guitar solo.

THEVERY CORPORATION, "Halfway Around the World"/"Scene at an Open Air Market" (Eighteenth Street Lounge)

Like a bossa nova dubplate cut by two third-store clerks and a piano-bar diva over a three-day weekend. Recommended for early-evening piba colodas while reading Anatole Broyard's *Kafka Was the Rage*.

WINK FEATURING THE INTERPRETERS, "Simple Man" (Ovum/Columbia)

Nine Inch Nails is the boilerplate, but this union of Philly phreaks produces yet another subgenre—power-pop techno. While Josh Wink's acid synth flares the furiously tacky "My Sharona" backbeat, interpreter Herschel Gaer walls like a skinny tie is slowly tightening around his neck.

GARBAGE, "I Think I'm Paranoid" (Amp Sounds)

Bent and nearly broken by the machinery of sex and art, Shirley Manson crawls out of a sterile hotel room in some country that barely qualified for the World Cup, wriggles into a shift

Address: Vital Music, PO Box 210, New York, NY 10076; Eighteenth Street Lounge, 1210 18th St. NW, #206, Washington, DC 20036

claim to be a stellar musician, and she isn't. The arrangements and playing—lots of keyboard and drum samples—are rudimentary. But her talent lies in knowing exactly what to put where—mischievously borrowing riffs from the Cars and the Kinks; taking simple elements and folding them into truly elegant organic shapes. Moody, ruminative, at times verging on laid-back, *Julie Rijn* is still corrosive: "Just another book about women in rock," Hanna chants, deriding the careless pigeonholing she and her colleagues are always subject to. The sometimes gentler side of the "new" Kathleen Hanna, shouldn't fool anybody. She may walk softly, but she carries a big hook. (Kill Rock Stars, 120 NE State Ave. #418, Olympia, WA 98501) **STEPHANIE ZACHAREK**



IAN BROWN

TITLE...
Unfinished Monkey Business

LABEL...
The Enclave/Mercury

6



GRAHAM COXON

TITLE...
The Sky Is Too High

LABEL...
Transcopic/Caroline

1



BERNARD BUTLER

TITLE...
People Make Us

LABEL...
Creation/Columbia

3

Learn about the past and you're still condemned to repeat it. This is the lesson of Britpop, by now a consciously backward-looking phenomenon that is tripping into the same sad traps as its '60s precursors while it slips to the dustbin of history. Drug busts, star girlfriends, fraternal infighting, sub-par blockbuster follow-ups—the only thing missing is a trip to India to get one's head sorted. (Opae)—Kula Shaker already covered that.)

In a scene where immaturity is celebrated, it figures that most Britpopsters aren't doing well when it comes to the ongoing rock star problem of aging gracefully. The inevitable solo albums from three present and former Britpop stars whose original bands actually did something with their record collections besides mimic them—ex-Suede guitarist Bernard Butler, Blur guitarist Graham Coxon, and ex-Stone Roses singer Ian Brown—all represent a retreat from adulthood to a place where pomposity, willful obscurity, and rote hooliganism live forever.

The only British guitarist to matter since the Smiths' Johnny Marr, Butler can drum up more drama than a week of *Jerry Springer*. His Suede-era intensity stopped sublimely short of bombast, but with *People Make Us*, the world's greatest hair-banger lets his hairiest instincts loose with an Oasis-like excess that's indulgent when it should be inspired. His lyrics come across as a parody of bad rock poetry ("There ain't any woman I know / That's got me so high"), and his thin, shaky voice misses notes. The result is an embarrassing mix of mastery and incompetence that proves why sidemen should stay on the side.

While Butler overwarrants slight tunes, Graham Coxon pulls together a handful of solo demos—the kind that sound like they were recorded at 5 A.M. in a hotel toilet after five minutes of solo-searching—and calls it an album. The Brit band with the most consistent quality control, Blur have been able to personalize any style that strikes their fancy while churning out top tunes. But on his own, Coxon sounds secondhand and melody-challenged. Inspired by American indie low-fi and old English drug-damaged cult heroes such as Syd Barrett, *The Sky Is Too High* is so loose and lame it's virtually unlistenable. Someone should have told him that give it off a

The Last Dog and Pony Show.

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REVIEWS

mixed message to leave your guitar untuned when you obviously know better and to celebrate your newly won sobriety with a pitch-oblivious whine that suggests you've never experienced a sober moment in your rock-star existence.

During the five-year recording of the Stone Roses' disastrously rawk *Second Coming*, Ian Brown found his expressively dazed vocal drone turned into mere sound effect by his erstwhile songwriting partner/bosom buddy John Squire; for his solo stab, Brown taught himself to (barely) play various instruments as he went along. As the title *Unfinished Monkey Business* suggests, the results are tentative, as incomplete as the Roses' swan song was overblown, but groovy in a scattershot, late-'90s way. Cheery drum programs, sprawling space rock, awkward bass lines, cheap dubby sonics, and various guitar twangings rub up against cute pop songs disguised as trippy jams. The sneering, vacant lyrics confirm that Brown isn't a particularly enlightened fellow (he recently let loose the most misinformed homophobic outburst since Axl Rose). Yet *Monkey Business* is surprisingly benign homemade ditties suggest that ragged Brown and rousing Butler might make a complementary match. Until then, we'll have to wait for Brit-pop's answer to Blind Faith. **BARRY WALTERS**

Label Spotlight

Bolshi is smarter than your average Big Beat label. by Simon Reynolds

Even when Big Beat isn't actively insulting your intelligence—as too much of the genre does—it's hardly music designed to engage your higher faculties. Bypassing the lofty conceptualism of self-consciously "progressive" electronica, Big Beat's manic stupor appeals to raved-up ex-indie rockers and (if it fulfills its manifest

that almost warrants the preposterous oxymoron "intelligent Big Beat."

Descended from Bolshevik, "bolshi" is an English slang word that means "uppity," "insubordinate," "bad attitude"; e.g., "don't get bolshi with me, mate!" As such it's the perfect signifier for the way Bolshi simultaneously fits Big Beat's brash boisterousness while subtly tweaking-and-cheeking the genre's norms. Even as Bolshi tracks adhere to Big Beat's party-hard line (the music's "got to make you move and make you smile," says label founder Sarah Francis), the label's best output glistens with wit and invention.

Bolshi's highest-profile producer, the Sweden-born but London-based Rasmus, is currently being touted as the upstart most likely to snatch Fatboy Slim's crown. A sampling wizard, Rasmus is skilled at meshing seemingly incompatible components into a functional rhythm-engine. So "Afro (Blowin' in the Wind)"—the highlight of Rasmus's debut LP *Mass Hysteria*—rubs rapper Speechless's basketball-in-the-park back-in-the-day reveries up against the Beech Boys' mournful "This Whole World," while the title track pivots around a list of bizarre fauna (bby, ocelot, unicorn, and so forth) sampled from the John Travolta movie *Phenomenon*. This messthetic of incongruity is something Rasmus gleaned from hardcore rave producers such as Sonz of a Loop Da Loop Era and Jonny L, who mished-mashed



Slim boy's phot: Rasmus, rising star of Big Beat.

commercial destiny in America) binge-drinking frat boys. Its rampant rumpus triggers the make-a-fool-of-yourself-on-the-dance-floor reflex.

Yet there are signs Big Beat is about to enter its "mature" phase, with certain producers and labels moving beyond the rabble-rousing cheap tricks that have served the genre so well. Scene leader Skint has started an experimental sub-label called Under 5's, while imprints such as Fused & Bruised and Bolshi are forging a sound



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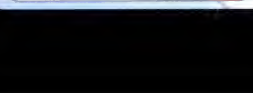
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VARIOUS ARTISTS

TITLE...
*Industrial F**kin' Strength 2: Unleash the Brutality*

LABEL...
Industrial Strength/TMC



They'd probably consider me a wimp, but the rave kids I identify with most are the outcast-in-electronica-circles gabba hordes of Holland (birthplace of the "happy gabba" on last year's deliciously cute *Make 'Em Mokum Crazy* compilation), Brooklyn (home of Industrial Strength Records), and many points between. Too attention-deficit-disordered to opt for drum'n'bass trigonometry or trip-hop torpor, I'm impressed that there's a subculture of nooligans addicted to the Oil-sprinted, BPM-blasting and wickedly witty gabba-gabba-hey jabber exemplified on *Unleash the Brutality*.

This music is to Goldie and Tricky what Alice Cooper was to Yes and Pink

White men can't funk?:
the basketball logo
of London's Bolshi label.



sped-up breakbeats, scratchadelic frenzies, bulbous bass, and daft samples to delicious effect.

Beaschomas are even more into mix-and-mismatch. The partnership of programmer Matt Austin and sample-finder/"chaotic influence" Tony Freeman, Beaschomas first scored on the Big Beat scene with their Bolshi debut "It's Eggyplectic," a glorious squelch-funk surge of jazzy keyboard licks, burbling clavinetts, and fierce acid stabs. But the duo really started to live up to their scavenger name—inspired by the surreal sight of a bed washed up on the mudbanks of the Thames River—with "Donuts," an off-kilter delight that became the title track of the first Bolshi compilation. Its unlikely constituents include quaint English voices, taped from a TV gardening program, talking about "peaches, split and juicy," "strawberries," and "nuts and medleys"; the panting of their pet dog, who refused to bark as desired; and a clipped guitar riff stolen from the B side of the Mekons' first single.

"Never Been in a Riot."

This influence from an earlier phase of indie-dance crossover—the punk-funk of Delta 5 and Gang of Four—carries through to the Top Group sample on Beaschomas' latest EP for Bolshi, *The Big Tuddy Sessions*. Generally, Beaschomas avoid the old skool hip-hop samples that dominate Big Beat, rejecting

them as obvious, nostalgic, and above all, inauthentic. "Matt and I are from Croydon and York, not New York!" says Freeman. All this means that Beaschomas' music is ultimately too eccentric (literally out-of-the-groove) for the Big Beat scene's structures. The duo's second Bolshi EP, *Planet Thump*—an audio souvenir of a day trip to (and night tripping at) the seaside—failed to build on the success of "Eggyplectic." With its Diana Ross loop, "messy beats," and rooster noises generated by rubbing Styrofoam together, the EP's killer cut, "Waiting for the Beach," was just too offbeat for DJs to work into their sets.

Beaschomas' compulsion to avoid being "run of the mix" means that they're the Bolshi band most capable of creating home-listening, album-length Big Beat. So far, though, it's the label's more straight-ahead acts—LHB and Laidback—that are being developed alongside Rasmus as album artists. Check Laidback's enjoyable if hardly groundbreaking *International* for a taste of Bolshi's drift toward more musically and less sampladelic terrain. Well-produced, live-sounding, "warm and organic," it's one possible interpretation of the term "intelligent Big Beat." Rasmus and Beaschomas offer another: anarcho-surrealist intellect in the service of music whose real raison d'être is "let's get a little stupid and pump that bass." ■

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REVIEWS

Quick Cuts

POSSUM DIXON

TITLE...
New Sheets

LABEL...
Interscope

6

With liberal doses of studio Clearasil applied by producer Ric Ocasek, Possum Dixon's rough and edgy blemishes have cleared right up. Although the result is shiny and clean, it seems to have washed away the band's most distinguishing characteristics. Dramatic, creep-show arrangements, augmented by the snap-at-any-moment tension of vocalist Rob Zabrecky's word pictures, have been replaced by the antiseptic angst characteristic of Ocasek's old band, the Cars. Sinister riffs are rare, as *New*

Sheets is instead packed with the let's = x glossy gallop of detached perfection. It sounds good, but it doesn't sound like Possum Dixon. Sometimes, though, Zabrecky fights back. His high-wire act on the title track will keep you on seat's edge, and "Only in the Summertime" is a compelling tug-of-war of frigid Cars-ian synth juxtaposed with Zabrecky's dark visions. Still, it's a bit too chilly under these sheets when there's no soul to inhibit them.

ERIK HIMMELSBACH

PULLMAN

TITLE...
Turnstiles & Junkpies

LABEL...
Thrill Jockey

7

Best known as low-end theorists in the rhythm machine Tortoise, bassist Doug McCombe and beat-miser Bundy Brown also have a few rustic roots in their musical family tree: McCombe is a longtime member of prairie-rockers Eleventh Dream Day, while Brown lifted a Duane Allman riff on his first post-Tortoise project, *Directions in Music*. Pullman find the former bandmates joining Rex's Curtis Harvey and Come's Chris Brokaw for a hop-along journey on an acoustic instrumental folk train. The quar-

ter's plaintive plucking echoes the pastoral finger-picking of John Fahey and Leo Kottke, but Pullman's pensively paced compositions allow each note to gladden in tranquil isolation. The odd ethnic waltz such as "Tsyasny" aside, Turnstiles sticks to one mode and mood. But the recording's crystal-clear immediacy, evocative late-night front-porch presence, and shimmering steel-string sentimentality more than compensate for any lack of variety. (Thrill Jockey, PO Box 478794, Chicago, IL 60647) TIM ROSS

GRAVITY KILLS

TITLE...
Perversion

LABEL...
LUT

3

Gravity Kills confessed all on their 1996 pseudo-hit, "Guilty," a first-degree Nine Inch Nails ripoff chock-full of self-incriminating non sequiturs such as "Who are you? / But I like it." The only thing that's perverse about Perversion is the band's pigheaded obsession with recreating NIN's "Head Like a Hole." Gravity Kills songs have no subjects

because pronouns don't matter to singer Jeff Scheel; the charges against "you" in the first verse always come back as revelations about "me" in the second. Lust, disgust, and ennui sound like the same numb sensation in Gravity Kills' music. Which might explain why "darkness" has seldom sounded so gray. JOSHUA WESTLUND

LISA GERMANO

TITLE...
Slide

LABEL...
4RD

6

When her voice is at its prettiest, Lisa Germano can come off as an indie Enya. In "No Color Here," she whispers sings, "All my mistakes woven in a rug / Black, blue, and dusty," then asks, "Is there a beauty there?" Maybe a more crucial question to ask of this lullaby-laden record is if there's too much beauty. Rockers might want less humming and more strumming, but this sort of melancholia has its place—indoors. The whole record has a muffled, under-the-covers vibe—something to do with the claustrophobic effect of her keyboards, especially the harmonium's oxygen-depleted sound. All this gives *Slide* a cozy charm, especially

when she's talking up domestic pleasures like "Wood Floors"; Germano seems to have a shut-in's dependence on home, sweet home. *Slide*'s most emblematic song, "Way Below the Radio," paints a picture of a fan's private world, huddled up in her room with the radio on, cuddling her "comfortable transistor." It's a beautiful song, but it doesn't live up to its own story since it's not fun enough to work as radio rock. I only turn on my transistor on those dark and lonesome nights when the power's out, and just then I'd probably flip the dial past dark and lonesome Lisa Germano. I need a beat to ride out the storms. SARAH VOWELL

Floyd. Cuts such as Delta Nine's "Dusted" are totally unmitigated random oscillator roar to annoy your parents with, the sound of an unbalanced washing machine shaking itself to pieces at the end of its spin cycle. But instead of staying pissed-off, most of the selections turn graceful or giddy midway through. In the tradition of Prodigy and Rammstein, such acts as Deadly Drive employ a semi-symphonic undertow and nimble snatches of Eurodisco beauty to make their meaty non-instrumentals delectable and songlike. They mix in repeated-beyond-call-of-common-sense half-decipherable slogans ("The number-one enemy of progress is questions") or realistically hardboiled movie/street conversations, judapose and slow and fuzz them into layers, then jarringly emphasize the most emotionally harangued dialogue available. The funniest tracks are the most over-the-top obscenities—redneck pig porn over *Dating Game*-theme shinnies (the Shaftmen's "Shaftman"), tough-ass bank robbers cracking heads, then counting down "one, two—fuck you" (DJ Narotic vs. U.V.C.'s "Step Into the Pit"), fanatical sermons about how using love as a weapon will get you assassinated (DJ Freak's "I Will Fight"). Beats beneath go bang/bang/bang/bang!, hammering so ridiculously fast they approximate one of those solid-white-noise sound-proofing machines used to insure privacy in psychiatric offices. I bet gabba brats dance insane to it like they're pushing too hard back at you, and I bet they have a blast. (Industrial Strength, 18 W 27th St., 8th Floor Front, New York, NY 10001) **chuck eber**



MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES

TITLE...
Live From the Middle East

LABEL...
Big Rig/Mercury

6



SUBLIME

TITLE...
Sublime Live—Stand by Your Van

LABEL...
Gasoline Riley/MCA

7

Two ska bands, from opposite coasts. One exudes sweetly good health, the other a tweaked buzz that fizzles and crumbles equally often. For one, the party's over; the other's just starting. So why is the dead guy still so much more vital?

Legendary for annihilating everything in the vicinity, Sublime's shows gave full reign to Brad Nowell's most destructive instincts. Anarchy was as much artistic principle as personal impulse; live, Nowell's incorrigible urge to screw things up took the band's music and fans to the brink of chaos. Unfortunately, because more than two thirds of *Stand by Your Van* dates from 1994, we can't hear the band trash the more manicured arrangements from 1996's *Sublime*. (The sole exception is "Caress Me Down," where Nowell forgets the lyrics, then does the first verse three times.) And the live CD's second half falters, a victim of murky sound and less distinct tunes. Still, as necrophilic exploitation goes, *Sublime Live* isn't half bad: Nowell's unruly genius stumbles through. He leads a cheer for Lou-Dog; scats, raps, even sings; tosses in hardcore and Toots and the Maytals before "Date Rape." The fragile dignity that sustained him never collapses—it's as wrong to see doom in his junkie talk as to take his boasts seriously. Nowell generally had no idea where he'd be in five minutes; what makes us any wiser?

Dicky Barrett's croak, on the other hand, conjures '40s slang: pep, vim, that sort of thing. His band, swinging hard and rocking harder, keeps the Boston crowd in its palm. The result: not as exciting as that sound. Everything goes hard/fast to swinging/fast, then back, and there's your album. Dicky can't really sing, which isn't a limitation, but it offers little respite from the onslaught. When he does croon, you want him to speed up again. *Live From the Middle East* is unremittently fun-fun-fun. It's probably perfect for your next workout or frat party—but simply listening to somebody else having a good time all the time is hard work. **JESSE BARRATT**

REVIEWS CONTINUE »



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REVIEWS

Retro Active

From Can's cinematic, panglobal grooves to Ash Ra Tempel's excursions into the psychedelic ether, Krautrock has always been a trip. by Richard Gehr



Holger Czukay/Rolf Dammers/Canaxis (Spoon/Mute)

6



Irmin Schmidt/Musk at Dusk - Impossible Holidays (Spoon/Mute)

9



Holger Czukay/Movies (Spoon/Mute)

9



Michael Karoli/Polly Eites/Deluge The Complete Version (Spoon/Mute)

8



Holger Czukay/On the Way to the Peak of Normal (Spoon/Mute)

5



Ash Ra Tempel/Join Inn/Starring Rosi (Purple Pyramid/Cleopatra)

8

Even before Kraftwerk's great mid-'70s cars, trains, and airwaves trilogy, Krautrock was largely about getting away—not least from Germany itself. Can, for instance, fused cut-and-paste wanderlust with a transgeneric rhythmic paganism guaranteed to transport musicians and listeners alike out of their skulls and back into their dancing butts. More ethereal than Can, Ash Ra Tempel sought utopia through psychedelic guitarist Manuel Gottsching's long and winding solos.

Can conceptualist/multi-instrumentalist Holger Czukay pioneered what I call "shutwave rock," a subgenre in which the exotic sound of the other disrupts implacable beats. Czukay studied with avant-garde composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, whose 1966 *Telemusik* combined electronic music and international shortwave radio transmissions into the eeriest Martian mix tape you'll ever hear. Shortly after joining Can, Czukay attempted to emulate Stockhausen with *Canaxis* (1968), a dry sandwich of choral loops and Asian samples. A decade later, Czukay announced his departure from Can with 1979's *Movies*, a gloriously giddy trapeze through ethnodelic soundscapes and a much more succulent Fourth World montage than *Canaxis*.

Two years in the making, *Movies* develops the slicker, funkier side of the multifaceted Can. If film is the locus of

imaginary worlds, as Czukay believed, *Movies* is a virtual Xanax experience. It kicks off with a refreshing blast of hot summer funk ("Cool in the Pool") before venturing into woody sampled Arabia ("Persian Love") and extended cinematic reveries ("Hollywood Symphony"), all intercut with bits and pieces of found dialogue and sound effects. Czukay's cutting-room flair for unlikely juxtapositions is almost as evident on the 1981 follow-up, *On the Way to the Peak of Normal*, whose slippery carrier grooves float on Pink Floyd opiated waves and a Zappa-esque sense of the cosmic absurd. The key tracks here are "Ode to Perfume" and "Pragman," which Baudelaire fans will recognize as the poet's royal road to ecstatic elsewhere.

After Can, keyboardist Irmin Schmidt—another former Stockhausen student—drifted toward (relatively) traditional song structures. On 1987's *Musk at Dusk* and 1991's *Impossible Holidays* (a double bill reissued on a single Spoon/Mute disc), Schmidt leads a musical tour through swoony vacation scenarios exuding the dreamlike allure and romantic artifice of movie sets. Schmidt is literally all over the place on these records. The rhythm section lays down fat, funky Caribbean beats underneath Paris accordions, breezy chanson lyrics brimful with mock melodrama ("The women have no pity / The men

Kraut to lunch: funkadelic mentra machine Can before they split to pursue solo vision-quests: from left, Michael Karoli, Irmin Schmidt, Jaki Liebezelt, Holger Czukay.



are sometimes shitty"), and more ennui than even Roxy Music.

Drummer Jackie Liebezelt and guitarist Michael Karoli were Can's real groove shamans. Karoli's 1984 solo album, *Deluge*—now reissued in unabridged form—is a sweetly flowing tube ride of a record buoyed along by Poly Eltes's repetitive sing-song chants. It's a reggae album, really, a dubbed-up tribal trip through hippie truisms ("sooner or later something will come along"). Sadly, only the first three tracks feature Liebezelt's amazing man-machine drumming: It's as though Eltes's patchouli-scented meditations had forced him to bail out prematurely and thus miss the cleansing rainstorm—"Deluge (the River)"—that washes it all away.

If Krautrock is defined largely by

droning, rhythmic minimalism, Ash Ra Tempel could be the rule-proving exception. Manuel Götsching finds his bliss in seemingly endless jams edited down to album-side portions. The ecstatically spacey "Freak 'n' Roll," which kicks off the Purple Pyramid reissue of 1973's *Join In*, contains nearly 20 minutes of top-shelf improvisation. Sounding uncannily similar to *Anthem of the Sun*-era Jerry Garcia, Götsching is kicked further into the stratosphere by prog/psych-keyboardist Klaus Schulze's squealing oscillations. The following year's *Starring Rosi* (on the same disc) highlights vocalist Rosi Mueller, whose gypsy-queen-in-rainbow-land lyrics can unfortunately drag even Götsching's most otherworldly flights back down to German soil. And who wants to go there? ■

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REVIEWS



THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS

TITLE...
Brothers Gonna Work It Out

LABEL...
Freestyle Dust/
Astralwerk



VARIOUS ARTISTS

TITLE...
White Noise Vol. 2

LABEL...
City Of Angels



Big Beat theory No. 1: A coterie of shrewd U.K. music-industry types conceive of a sound tailored to the predilections of camouflage pants-wearing, snowboarding, white middle-class students. Post-rave and post-Britpop, "the kids" want to hear the cocky, testosterone-fueled largesse of Oasis translated for the dance floor: something like trip-hop on steroids.

While they epitomize Big Beat, the Chemical Brothers remain larger than their stunted child. Their new mix-CD *Brothers Gonna Work It Out* foregrounds what you expect—the velocity rush of monolithic breakbeats, acid frequencies, and synth screeches. But the album also deviates from Big Beat's well-hammered agenda, panning out into austere hush and moments of pure light. Like the suspended seconds of a beatless rave break in which a lost voice, frosted by the sound of dry ice, mantras "give me some love." And like the end-sequence where the Chems' reverberated remix of the Manic Street Preachers' "Everything Must Go" drops into a decelerated remix of Spiritualized's narcotic "I Think I'm In Love." When Jason Pierce breathes "I think I can fly / I'm probably just falling," the chimes are elongated so that they arc into space and float. Which makes *Brothers Gonna* a journey from Big Beat's drum-crashing core right out to the fringes of dreamy progressive ambience.

Big Beat theory No. 2 comes in here: While the style dovetails nicely with indie rock's worldview, it sits strangely with the crippling canon of "good taste" that's emerged in British dance culture. Beard-stroking house-and-techno purists despise Big Beat for bypassing their agenda of subtle analog warmth in favor of populist dance floor-firing dynamics—commercial house's snare rolls and harsh, abrasive Euro-synth effects. It's these "transgressions" that lend Big Beat an exciting, cartoon irreverence. But cartoons can become formula: On *City of Angels' White Noise Vol. 2* collection, for instance, Freestylers featuring Tenor Fly's "B-Boy Stance" stockpiles a mass of bad-boy clichés—gunshots, "original gangsta" shouts—to weary effect.

Big Beat theory No. 3: Mythical rude bwoys aside, Big Beat is a whiteout. It falls entirely to engage with contemporary black music. Don't expect speed garage or swingbeat tracks in the Chemical Brothers' mix or sampled by the artists on *White Noise*. The better *White Noise* tracks, such as Tipper's "Twister" and Environmental Science's "The Day the Zak Stood Still, Pt. 2," have learned a few tricks from jungle. Prime movers in London's emergent nu-skool breaks scene (basically Big Beat's somber, experimental older brother), Tipper's vibrato hollows of sub-bass sound like a midtempo take on 1998's dark, scientific strain of drum'n'bass. Environmental Science combine jungle's jittery breaks with staccato horn stabs and a shrieking, pterodactyl-on-the-attack riff that harks back to early hardcore rave.

Generally, though, the aptly titled *White Noise* shows how Big Beat treats black music as a museum piece. It's safe to process late-'80s Schoolly D and early dancehall, but not the lick of a late-'90s ruffneck staring you in the face. Blackstreet are just too black and too street for comfort. And this is Big Beat's loss. "Dangerous" from one angle (it gives techno trainpotters palpitations), sure. But from any other perspective, it's safe, white, middle class, and male. **BETHAN COLE**

**RASCO**TITLE...
*Time Waits for No Man*LABEL...
Stones Throw**VARIOUS ARTISTS**TITLE...
*From Beyond*LABEL...
Interdimensional
Transmissions

No blinding cream-puff video and pressed designer label can save you now. Like New York's Canibus, Solefather Rasco's only angle is straight for the head. The Bay Area rapper simply brains the listener with his delivery, giving MCs headaches by the pound without trying to be complex. With independent hip-hop, anybody can come out, but few can come correct. Rasco has the correctional facilities.

His war din was 1997's anthem "The Unassisted"—released on Stones Throw, the label started by turntablist/producer Peanut Butter Wolf of *Return of the DJ/Deep Concentration* fame. On his debut full-length *Time Waits for No Man*, Rasco dismembers the ranks of the stank with deft production handiwork courtesy of other rising stars of the West Coast underground. On "Me & My Crew,"

Kut Masta Kurt punctuates Rasco's brusque flow with sample blasts and a Sanford and Son-type sax, while on "Take It Back Home," Kurt's horn chops pay homage to Chill Rob G's 1990 classic "Wild Pitch." "Major League" features the production/rhyming dexterity of Dilated Peoples' Evidence.

Throughout *Time Waits*, turntable incisions provide blistering reminders that choruses can empower hip-hop music rather than suck up to wack mass trends. The album leaps geographic bounds by appealing to hip-hop's universal battle call: basic beats and rhymes. Rasco's gimmick is "gimme the fucking mic!" Give him your time. (Stones Throw, 3555 El Camino Real, #320, San Mateo, CA 94403) **DAVE TOMPKINS**

In the early '80s, electro was dismissed by many R&B fans for being mechanistic and heartless. "Oh, the inhumanity, the inhumanity," wailed the average soul connoisseur, recoiling from the drum machine rigor and frigid synth-bleeps of tracks such as Man Parrish's "Hip Hop Be Bop." What these Luddites didn't grasp was the cold fascination of sounds seemingly untouched by the hand of man. Now a new generation of post-techno artists are rediscovering electro's icy thrills.

In the wake of electro-influenced Detroit outfits Drexxica and Aux 88, Ann Arbor, Michigan's Interdimensional Transmissions label has put together *From Beyond*, a document of the emergent global network of cyborg-funk. On "Starchild," Vienna's Sluts and Strings snatch a burst of Vocoderized chorale from Whodini's old-school classic "Magic's Wand" and fold this vocal fragment into a stop/start syncopation that push/pulls you through an inextricably labyrinthine groove. Miami's Phoenicia takes the art of rhythm programming to insanely convoluted lengths on "Roba," an audio-maze of trapdoor grooves and pretzel logic. Best of all is Dutch producer I-f's insanely catchy "Space Invaders Are Smoking Grass," which makes your head swim with its glutinously extruded bass-pulse, absurdly wistful three-note refrain, and robo-trippin' chorus wavering on the brink of indecipherability. A fossil from the future, "Space Invaders" is the standout track on a brilliant compilation. (Interdimensional Transmissions, PO Box 8298, Ann Arbor, MI 48107) **KODWO ESHUN**

REVIEWS CONTINUE »



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REVIEWS

Heavy Rotation

A recap of the past few months' most notable releases



BILLY BRAGG & WILCO

TITLE...
Mermaid Avenue
LABEL...
Elektra

What you're missing The Bragg/Wilco/Woody Guthrie combination feels nostalgic and contemporary at once, like a smatch of Americans recalled years after you thought it'd passed from memory.

Conclusion What can Guthrie say to *Seinfeld's* America? More than you'd expect.



CREEPER LAGOON

TITLE...
I Become Small and Go
LABEL...
NickenBag

What you're missing S.F. band whose sound lies somewhere between the Matadorian arch-intelligentia and the miniaturists of the Elephant 6 collective.

Conclusion Perhaps DreamWorks will capture the band's semi-live charm next record; for now, *I Become Small and Go* is the year's prettiest puzzle.



LAURYN HILL

TITLE...
The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill
LABEL...
Columbia

What you're missing Self-produced by the most glamorous and hitherto least assertive Fugee. Miseducation pounds, bounces, clowns, and resounds.

Conclusion This album is as emblematically cool as Tarantino was in '94, Beck in '96, Cornish in '97.



QUASI

TITLE...
Featuring "Birds"
LABEL...
Up

What you're missing Relentlessly grim assessments of love, work, friendship, love, the future, intellect, and did we mention love?

Conclusion Coming from most bands, this would just be pretentious whining, but Quasi's sound elevates it to the level of black humor.



RANCID

TITLE...
Life Won't Wait
LABEL...
Epitaph

What you're missing The catch in singer Tim Armstrong's voice, which, at its best, ensnare you back to memories of eyes-locked, talk-all-night communication.

Conclusion Success seems to agree with Rancid's songwriting. Their world, like their sound, has gotten bigger.



ELLIOTT SMITH

TITLE...
XO
LABEL...
DreamWorks

What you're missing Smith's emergence from the underground—where he recorded three lovely, homemade indie-label solo albums—into universal, powerful work.

Conclusion This is his happiest-sounding record to date, and his saddest, too.



RUFUS WAINWRIGHT

TITLE...
Rufus
LABEL...
DreamWorks

What you're missing Wainwright's originality is bound up in a sense of tradition far removed from rock; try musical comedy, French chanson, or maybe Al Jolson.

Conclusion Where's the lounge movement now that we have somebody who knows how to take its values seriously?



WINK

TITLE...
Herebeare
LABEL...
Ozum/Columbia

What you're missing Wink puts a few quarters in the jukebox, which dispenses jazzy drum 'n' bass, mutant hip-hop, rocktronica, electro-soul, and acid buggery.

Conclusion Wink's utopian, pan-tribal chutzpah is admirable; if he hasn't yet hit on the stylistic fusion of his dreams, give him props for dreaming.

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Pg. 118

PAGE 22 Dickies coveralls, \$29, call (800) DICKIES for retailers near you. Maegde U. Knechte "Geistige Sanität" top, \$110, at Hotel of the Rising Star, New York City; Ron Herman Fred Segal, Los Angeles.

PAGE 72 Finesse's *Jules snakeskin jacket*, \$500, and *pants*, \$400, at *Jules*, Los Angeles. N-Type's *Meeoshe Sports shirt*, \$95, at *Set It On*, Dallas. J-Boo's *Jules suede jacket*, \$520, and *miniskirt*, \$200, at *Jules*, Los Angeles. Champ MC's *Pure Playaz denim jeans*, \$80, at *Baseline Sportswear*, Los Angeles.

PAGE 91 "California" T-shirt, \$10, at Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles.
PAGE 92 Betsey Johnson gold net armlet, \$250, at Betsey Johnson, New York City.
PAGE 94 Helmut Lang hooded cotton long-sleeve shirt, \$105, at Helmut Lang, New York City; Rolo, San Francisco.
PAGE 95 vintage bikini top, \$14, at Wasteland, Los Angeles.

PAGE 196 Courtney Love's *Seraph by Sheryl* Daniel Lulle bust vest, \$140, at Louis Boston, Boston. *Vintage Levi's skirt*, \$28, at Westland, Los Angeles. *Stormie's classic wristcuffs*, \$585, at Jennifer Kaufman, Beverly Center, Los Angeles. *Missula Auf der Maur's Rick Owen jersey top*, \$180, at Henri Bendel, New York City. *Earl Jean's leather pants*, \$470, at Naked, Los Angeles; *Ron Herman Fred Segal*, Los Angeles. *Stormie's beaded armcuff*, \$615, at Jennifer Kaufman, Los Angeles. *Eric Erlandson's undershirt*, \$39, cotton *V-neck shirt*, \$39, both by *Fever by John Cherpas*, at Ron Herman Fred Segal, Los Angeles; *Antique Boutique*, New York City.

PAGE 116 *154 Quicksilver w/ bucket belt*, \$22, at Fred Segal, Santa Monica, California; IMG Incorporated, New York City. **Camo/leather jacket**, \$18.99, at Canal Jeans, New York City.

PAGE 117 *Unionbay cargo pants*, \$46, at Parleian, Montgomery, Alabama; Youkners, Des Moines, Iowa. *Surplus cotton briefs*, \$2.99, at Canal Jeans, New York City. *Army utility jacket*, \$2, at The Trader, New York City.

PAGE 118 *Comme des Garçons Shirt gordinerie jacket*, \$360, at Comme des Garçons, New York City. *American Eagle Outfitters cargo pants*, \$38, at American Eagle Outfitters, nationwide.

Calvin Klein Underwear cotton briefs, \$18, at Macy's, nationwide. *Bloomingdale's Underwear vintage belt*, \$10, at What Comes Around Goes Around, New York City. *Vintage straw hat*, \$20, at What Comes Around Goes Around, New York City. *Converse sneakers*, suggested retail \$32, at Macy's, New York City; Sears, nationwide.

1981 Diesel twill shirt, \$95, at Wish, Atlanta; select Nordstrom stores nationwide. *Slates pants*, \$60, call (800) SLATES-1. *Converse sneakers*, suggested retail \$33, at Nordstrom, New York City; J.C. Penney, nationwide.

PAGE 120 *Surplus cotton briefs*, \$2.99, at Canal Jeans, New York City. *Organization for Returning Financial Interest touring jacket*, \$310, at Hotel of the 121 Star, New York City.

PAGE 121 *American Eagle Outfitters shirt*, \$34, at American Eagle Outfitters, nationwide. *Vintage badge*, \$2, from FifthMart, New York City. *Diesel pants*, \$120, at American Rag, Los Angeles; Huh, Scottsdale, Arizona.

[illegible]

PHOTO: ANETTE AURELL FASHION: MADEE FINDLAY/LENN CAMOUFLAGE DRAWSTRING JACKET FROM CANAL JEANS, COTTON TWILL BUCKET HAT BY QUICKSILVER

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GENIUS LESSONS BY SEAN LANDERS

#29 "TEEN POETRY CONTEST" WAY BACK IN THE SEVENTIES, WHEN WE ALL HAD SHAGS AND BELL BOTTOMS, I WAS ON THE VERGE OF ENDING IT ALL OVER AN ELFIN CHEERLEADER WITH COCK EYED TITS. SHE GAVE EXCELLENT HAND-TOBS, THAT HAD ME CONVINCED THAT WHAT I WAS FEELING WHEN SHE HAD ME IN HER GRIP, WAS LOVE. ONE DAY SHE DECIDED TO GIVE ME THE BOOT, AND I HURT SO BAD I HAD VERTIGO, DRY HEAVES AND A BALL ACHIE. I HOOBLED HOME AND SCAMPERED UP TO MY ATTIC, WITH THE INTENTION OF ENDING THE TORCHERED, SKINNY, PUBIC, ADAMS APPLE EXISTENCE THAT WAS MINE. IN MY DESPERATE SEARCH FOR ROPE I FOUND A PEN, AND REALIZED THAT I NEEDED TO WRITE A SUICIDE NOTE. HOW ELSE WOULD THE WORLD KNOW WHAT A GENIUS I TRULY WAS DEEP WITHIN MY SKELETAL, EARWAX SCENTED FRAME. I SCRIBBLED UNTIL IT GOT DARK OUTSIDE, TEARS ROLLING OFF MY CHEEKS AND FLOPPING ON TO THE PAGE LIKE CLOWN SHOES ACROSS A HOT PARKING LOT. OF COURSE, WHAT I WROTE THAT DAY SUCKED, BUT TO MY YOUNG THE SATURATED BRAIN, IT WAS SHEER BRILLIANCE. I FELT LIKE JOHN BOY WALTON VIEWING HIS FAMILY'S AND THE WORLD'S FOIBLES FROM ABOVE. NOTHING COULD TOUCH ME NOW THAT I HAD THE POWER OF REFLECTION. I WAS A WRITER, I KNEW WHAT PEOPLE WERE THINKING BEFORE THEY THOUGHT IT, I UNDERSTOOD EVERYTHING, LIFE IS POINTLESS, WE'RE ALL DOOMED, LOVE IS MERELY A DEMONSTRATION OF LONELINESS, GOD IS THE WISHEFUL THINKING OF THE FEARFUL, HUMANITY IS PATHOS, ETC. I WROTE THROUGH THE NIGHT, IGNORING CALLS FOR DINNER AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MY SISTERS OF FAVORITE TV SHOWS STARTING AND ENDING. I WANTED TO BE ALONE IN THE ATTIC, A MEMBER OF MY NEW CLUB. I WAS NOW A POET/PHILOSOPHER, A WRITER/GENIUS. AT THE END OF THAT NIGHT AFTER DESTROYING HUMANITY AND THEN BUILDING IT BACK UP AGAIN I DECIDED THAT A LIFE WELL LIVED WAS A LIFE WORTH LIVING AND MOST OF ALL, I WAS TOO SMART TO DIE, I HAD TO LIVE AND WRITE. WITH MY GENIUS, THERE WAS NO TELLING WHAT GOOD MAY COME OF IT. WHAT ADVANCES CIVILIZATION WOULD BE PRIVILEGE TO FROM THE SHEER POWER AND VIRTUE OF MY PROSE. WHO KNEW, IT WAS'NT OUT OF THE QUESTION THAT SOMEONE OF MY MAGNITUDE WOULD SOMEDAY RULE THE WORLD OR AT LEAST THE FREE PORTION OF IT AND I WOULD PROBABLY SOLVE ALL OF THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS WHILE I WAS AT IT. I RETURNED DOWNSTAIRS FROM MY ATTIC CROW'S NEST IN THE HEAVENS. I WENT UP THERE A COWERING FOOL ON THE BRINK OF SELF ANNIHILATION, AND RETURNED A CONQUERING HERO, A PHILOSOPHER. A GENIUS. THE HOUSE WAS NOW ASLEEP, MY PARENTS WHO UNDERSTOOD ME AND WHO NEVER DISTURBED ME THE WHOLE NIGHT, HAD MY DINNER IN MY BEDROOM WAITING FOR ME, WHICH I ATE AND THEN FELL ASLEEP, NO LONGER LOVE LORN OVER MY CHEERLEADER BUT CERTAINLY DREADING THE THOUGHT OF LIFE WITHOUT HER EXCELLENT HAND JOBS. I WANT TO A-

WAKEN THE DORMANT POET IN ALL OF YOU ANGST RIDDEN TEENAGE GENIUSES OUT THERE. SO I'M HOLDING A TEEN POETRY CONTEST HERE ON MY PAGE. I'LL SELECT TWO WINNERS, ONE BOY AND ONE GIRL. THE WINNING ENTRIES WILL BE REPRODUCED IN THEIR ORIGINAL FORM A 50% SCALE ON THIS PAGE IN FEBRUARY'S ISSUE. HERE'S THE RULES. YOU HAVE TO BE A TEEN-AGER. YOUR ENTRY CAN NOT BE LONGER THAN ONE SIDE OF ONE 8 1/2 X 11 PAGE. ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY NOVEMBER 1ST.

PUT YOUR PHONE NUMBER AND ADDRESS ON THE BACK OF THE PAGE. IN THE EVENT THAT I DON'T GET MANY ENTRIES THE CONTEST IS OFF. FOR ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE WRITTEN TO ME THAT YOU CAN WRITE BETTER THAN I CAN, NOW IS YOUR CHANCE TO PROVE IT. OH, BY THE WAY, THE WINNER GETS MY JOB WHEN I LEAVE, NOW GET WRITING.

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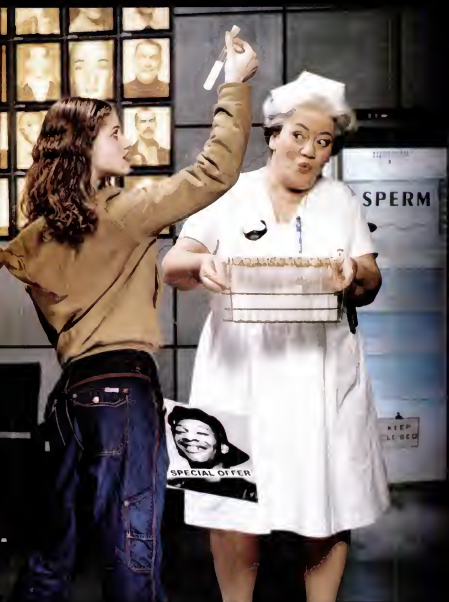


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From left
to right:
Walling,
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Ketter,
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Main picture, left to right: Skirt - Ketter 849, shirt - Thorpy 666, bodywarmer - Kirun.
Pants - Slave 849, knitwear - Dashea, hat - Hindod d. Pants - Walling 840, sweat - Enchol.

A vertical column of numerous yellow and orange butterflies, of various species, is arranged to form the silhouette of an Absolut Citron bottle. The butterflies are set against a dark, gradient background that is lighter in the center. Several individual butterflies are also shown in flight around the central column. At the bottom, the words "ABSOLUT CITRON." are written in large, bold, yellow capital letters.

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